

THE REVELATION OF CREATION

As envisioned in the Upanishads

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English exposition by:--

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia
Ayodhya (Faizabad, U.P.)

Full address of Author—36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg,
 P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—224123
 Distt.—Faizabad, U.P. India.

Website: < www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com >

Email of Author: (i) < ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com >

(ii) < ajai Kumar books@gmail.com >

Facebook ID < www.facebook.com/ajaiKumarchhawchharia8 >

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/AjaiKumarChhawchharia

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PREFACE

“From the Tapa (the penance), that the manifested form of the Supreme Being (as Viraat Purush, the cosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm) did, was born the virtues of righteousness and truth. From these arose the night and the day, and thence from them came into being the ocean of water”—The Rik/Rig Veda, 10/190/1.

The ‘Revelation of Creation’ has been elaborately described in the different Upanishads that are part of the ancient scriptures known as the ‘Vedas’. In this book we shall read how this cosmic process has been envisioned in these Upanishads.

All the relevant Upanishads that describe this mysterious and esoteric cosmic process by which the entire creation, consisting of both the animate as well as the inanimate world, has come into being have been included in this book.

We will pick up each of these Upanishads one by one and list them under the respective Vedas to which they belong.

Since this Book is primarily meant for English-speaking readers who may not be able to read the original texts in Sanskrit or may not be interested in it either, only the English rendering of the Upanishadic verses are included here.

Further, the Upanishads cover a wide variety of subjects related to the philosophy of metaphysics and spirituality, and therefore even if they cover the theme of the ‘Revelation of Creation’ it is the context of the wider subject that they are dealing with in a comprehensive manner. Since the subject matter of our present book is to describe the process of the ‘Revelation of Creation’, we shall restrict ourselves to only those Upanishads, and even in these only those parts, that are relevant to our topic—viz. ‘The Revelation of Creation’.

Therefore, only those specific verses that describe the Revelation of Creation in the overall context of the metaphysical philosophy of the Upanishads have been selected for the purpose of this book.

The Upanishads are highly evolved intellectual products of extremely enlightened and wise minds of ancient sages and seers who had the mental capacity to have deep insight into the most mysterious aspects of creation, analyse them and deduce facts not apparent to ordinary persons. Their language was however a bit difficult to understand or decipher because they spoke in a language they were accustomed to but beyond the reach

of the un-initiated. It is just like the case of a learned university professor giving a lecture on some technical subject that only his students who are versed in the technical terms can understand. So, mostly, what these great sages and seers said or preached remained mystery down the ages.

We will first read how the Holy Bible narrates this event in the Old Testament, the Book of Genesis, and then move on to the reading some of the selected verses of the Psalms which also reflect on the theme that the 'Lord' is the Supreme One in this creation, that He is the one who is the Lord God of this entire Universe.

One very important thing is to be noted here—and it is that the Supreme Being whom the Bible refers to as the 'Lord', the Upanishads call Him 'Brahm'.

Remember: All the scriptures speak of the same Truth and the same Lord, though they use different words and imagery to explain and drive home the same point.

My attempt in this wonderful "Book of The Revelation of Creation" is to unravel this mystery as envisioned in the Upanishads in simple English language so that even a common man may have an idea of what may have happened at the time of Creation, and then how the initial process rolled on to give rise to the complex world we see today. It will help the reader to understand the mysteries of our complex creation and the complexities involved in this cosmic process.

Finally, I want to say one humble word: I am not a scholar by even the wildest of imagination. I am merely an instrument, say a 'pen', in the hands of the Divine Lord, and just do the bidding of the Lord who is the 'Primary Author' of these Holy Books. A 'pen' deserves no credit; the praise goes to the 'Author' who in the case of all the books written by 'me' is Lord God known by the name of "RAM". Well yes, the Lord has thousands of names, and all the names indicate the same Lord, but for me he is known as "RAM". And surely it's a wonder of wonders how the Lord has got these books written through a dumb man as me: and this itself is a great mystery indeed. But nevertheless, the Lord who created this magnificent creation from nothing, from nowhere, can do wonders which are beyond the ability of the mind to grasp and comprehend.

Therefore, let us not forget that what we read in this book is merely a 'peek' into the unknown and the un-knowable! And while doing so we must raise our hands in salutation for the Supreme Lord of Creation who has given us a wonderful world to live in!!

AMEN.

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia.

Date: 1st September, 2015.

Email of Author: ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com

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THE REVELATION OF CREATION

(As envisioned in the Upanishads)

Chapter 1

To start with our present narration, we shall first read how the **Holy Bible** conceives this process in the **Old Testament** in the **Book of Genesis: 1-3**, and how it asserts in the **Book of Psalms** that the Lord is the Supreme Being who is the Lord God and the Supreme Controller of the entire creation.

It ought to be noted here that the Supreme Being whom the Bible addresses as the “Lord”, has been addressed as “Brahm” in the Upanishads.

(a) The Holy Bible, the Old Testament

Genesis 1

- 1: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
- 2: And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
- 3: And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
- 4: And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.
- 5: And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.
- 6: And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.
- 7: And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.
- 8: And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.
- 9: And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.
- 10: And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.
- 11: And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.
- 12: And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
- 13: And the evening and the morning were the third day.
- 14: And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:
- 15: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth:

and it was so.

16: And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

17: And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

18: And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

19: And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

20: And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21: And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

22: And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

23: And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

24: And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

25: And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

26: And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28: And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29: And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

30: And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

31: And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Genesis 2

1: Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2: And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3: And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

4: These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

5: And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field

before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

6: But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

7: And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

8: And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9: And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

10: And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

11: The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

12: And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

13: And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

14: And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

15: And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

16: And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

18: And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

19: And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

20: And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

21: And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22: And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23: And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24: Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25: And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Genesis 3

1: Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of

the garden?

2: And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4: And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6: And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

7: And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

8: And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

9: And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

10: And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

11: And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12: And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13: And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

14: And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

16: Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17: And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18: Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

20: And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

21: Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

22: And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

23: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24: So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

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(b) The PSALMS

(1) Psalm no. 8, verse nos. 3-9:

3: When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

4: What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

5: For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

6: Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

7: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

8: The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

9: O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

(2) Psalm no. 33, verse nos. 6-22:

6: By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

7: He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.

8: Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9: For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

10: The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

11: The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

12: Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD: and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

13: The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.

14: From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

15: He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.

16: There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

17: An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.

18: Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

19: To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.
 20: Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield.
 21: For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.
 22: Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

(3) Psalm no. 65, verse nos. 6-13:

6: Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power:
 7: Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.
 8: They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.
 9: Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.
 10: Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.
 11: Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.
 12: They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side.
 13: The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

(4) Psalm no. 66, verse nos. 5-12:

5: Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.
 6: He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.
 7: He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.
 8: O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:
 9: Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.
 10: For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.
 11: Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.
 12: Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.

(5) Psalm no. 97, verse nos. 1-6:

1: The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.
 2: Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.
 3: A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.
 4: His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.
 5: The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
 6: The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.

(6) Psalm no. 113, verse nos. 1-9:

- 1: Praise ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD.
- 2: Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore.
- 3: From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD's name is to be praised.
- 4: The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.
- 5: Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high,
- 6: Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!
- 7: He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;
- 8: That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.
- 9: He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children.
- Praise ye the LORD.

(7) Psalm no. 148, verse nos. 1-13:

- 1: Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights.
- 2: Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.
- 3: Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.
- 4: Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.
- 5: Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.
- 6: He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.
- 7: Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:
- 8: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word:
- 9: Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:
- 10: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:
- 11: Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:
- 12: Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:
- 13: Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.

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Chapter 2

The Revelation of Creation according to The Upanishads of the Rig/Rik Veda

2. (a) Aeiteriya Upanishad:--

The supreme Soul (Parmatma) desires to create the cosmos or the universe. He creates the various Lokas (worlds) as well as their patron Gods or guardians to look after them. From 'Hiranyagarbha' is first created the 'Viraat Purush', and from the latter's body are created the various Gods.

Canto—1/Section—1

1. At the very beginning of the creation or even prior to it, there was only the supreme Soul in a primordial form. Besides it, there was nothing that can be called conscious or live (i.e. there was no life or any efforts towards producing it as such). Then, that entity (the supreme Soul) thought that it should create the myriad, fascinating world and the vast cosmos (i.e. it decided to 'create', it thought of 'doing something' and the cosmos was a result of his decision or determination to do so) (1).

2. Deciding thus, the supreme Soul first created the four 'Lokas' (i.e. 4 levels of abodes for different types of creatures that would eventually inhabit and populate them when the creation comes into existence).

These 4 Lokas were the following— (i) Ambh— the area of the vast space or cosmos lying between the Devaloka (the abode of Gods) and the Swarloka (i.e. the heaven, the place where exalted souls will find rest after their liberation and ultimate salvation from this world; the deep recesses of space, millions of light years away from earth and from where no visible stars etc. are seen). (ii) Marichi— that area of the open and vast space where all the stars, planets, the Sun, the Moon etc. are the present (i.e. the visible galaxy). (iii) Martyaloka— the earth where mortals would eventually live, and (iv) Apaha— the space below the surface of the earth, i.e. the subterranean world or the netherworld where water is present. [According to this theory, the earth is supposed to be hypothetically flat] (2).

3. Having created the various abodes or Lokas, the supreme Soul (Brahm) thought that now he should create the various 'Lokpals, i.e. the custodians or guardians of these Lokas to look after and take care of them (i.e. to protect, sustain them). Thus, from the undefined, shapeless, primordial fluid or jelly-like egg, he first created the very first signs of life in the form of an embryo-like entity called 'Hiranyagarbha', and it was eventually

given a shape (or was moulded into an image) of a 'Purush' (a male form and he was called 'Viraat') (3).

[Note :- Hence, 'Viraat Purush' was the first living entity created by the supreme soul called Brahm or Ishwar (or Eshwar); it had a definitive macrocosmic form and shape; he was the first male that appeared in creation. We must note that the 'Viraat Purush' was the gross form of Brahm. It was the macrocosmic body of the cosmos. This 'Viraat' body had the macrocosmic subtle body which was called 'Hiranyagarbha', and Brahm who was the soul of the 'Viraat Purush' was called Ishwar.]

4. As a next step, the supreme Soul (Brahm, Parmatma, Ishwar or the macrocosmic soul or consciousness) did severe Tapa (i.e. did penances and made a firm resolve) to finally give shape to various organs of 'Hiranyagarbha' so that it can lead a 'life'.

[That is, the supreme Soul thought that it must shape the newly formed image of 'Hiranyagarbha' in such a way that it can sustain itself independently and lead an independent life. It also ensured that 'Hiranyagarbha' will lead a life which will ultimately come to an end at the end of its tenure; this was done to maintain the equilibrium of Nature and to prevent it from superseding the supreme Brahm in some distant time in future and usurping the latter's ultimate supremacy in creation.]

As a result of that strong resolve (Tapa), a rounded hole appeared in 'Hiranyagarbh' which was to become his mouth. From the mouth emerged the organ of speech (tongue), and from the speech evolved the 'Fire God' who is the patron God of speech. Then the holes representing the nostrils appeared, and from these nostrils emerged 'Pran', i.e. the vital wind or breath which is synonymous with life. Its patron guardian was the 'Wind God'. After that emerged the eyes, and from the eyes came the power to see and observe. Thence emerged their patron God, the Aditya (the Sun God). Ears came next, followed by the power to hear as well as the various directions of the universe. After the ears, appeared the skin (to enclose or sack the already produced organs and give them a definite shape). From the latter appeared the hairs which in turn produced the various vegetations and herbs.

Next in the sequence of evolution came the heart; from the heart came the mind, and from the latter emerged the 'Moon God'. The navel made its appearance next, followed by 'Appan' (the wind force pressing down the intestines). From the latter appeared death or the 'Death God'.

Finally came the genitals, and from them the semen, and from the latter came the vital spark of life represented by the sperms (i.e. the fluid semen contained sperms which were infused and empowered with the divine and magical powers to create new life) (4).

[Note :- (i) The last sentence is very important. The 'Hiranyagarbha' or the macrocosmic subtle body of the 'Viraat' was created from the primordial fluid (verse no. 3) and now it has been empowered to create fresh life on its own and thereby set-off the chain reaction through its own life-creating fluid called semen— the fluid which left to itself is nothing but a shapeless mass or globule of mucous, but has the magical and stupendous potential to recreate its parent body. The initial spark of life provided by the supreme Soul or Brahm in order to initiate the process of creation as in verse no. 1-4 is carried further on endlessly till the time everything merges back into the original primordial entity as in verse no. 1.

For all practical purposes, the role of the supreme Brahm ends with the creation of 'Hiranyagarbha' or Brahma. Now henceforth, the propagation of this vast and myriad creation is the job of 'Hiranyagarbha' or Brahma. The word 'Brahma' means 'the one who is the result of a wish made by Brahm, the parent'. The fully formed 'Hiranyagarbh' is also called the 'Viraat Purush' or the vast, macrocosmic primary Male who is the male-parent aspect of the creation.

(ii) Water is the basic and the first requirement for life to evolve. Scientists search for traces of water molecules as an indication of life in the cosmos. This Upanishad also supports this theory.

(iii) The jelly-like, viscous, primordial globule-like mass from which the first signs of the forthcoming creation became apparent has a nearest analogue in the zoological kingdom— and it is the single cell creature called 'Amoeba' or other microbes. Any student of biology knows how an Amoeba reproduces— it simply splits into two and the second Amoeba is an exact replica of the first so much so that it is impossible to differentiate between the two. This allegory will explain how and why Brahm and its creation are synonymous and identical with each other.

Canto 1/Section 2

The human body was created as a symbolic abode for various Gods. Food etc. were created for quenching hunger, thirst etc., or to sustain those Gods.

1. The various Gods (such as fire, moon etc. described previously in section 1) created by the supreme Soul (Brahm) fell into this vast and fathomless great ocean symbolising the cosmos. They were provided with basic traits of life such as having hunger and thirst. They asked their creator (Brahma) to create and provide them with a habitat from where they can get their meals to survive or can acquire such things that can satisfy their basic needs of food and drink to satisfy their natural and inherent tendency of being hungry and thirsty (1).

2. On their request, the supreme Lord created the body of the cow. The Gods said, 'It is not sufficient or appropriate for us'. Then the Lord created the body of the horse. Seeing it, they said, 'This is also not sufficient or appropriate for us' (2).

3. Then the supreme Lord created the human body and showed it to them. The Gods expressed their pleasure at it and observed that it was very beautiful. Verily, the human being is the best in the entire creation. The supreme Lord said to the Gods, 'All of you enter this human body at your designated places and make it your abode' (3).

[Note :- Though not explicitly mentioned, the human body must have been made from the same fluid which was used to create 'Viraat Purush' because that was the only 'raw material' available with Brahma at the time of creation. He even created food from it— see section 3 verse no. 2.]

4. The Fire God assumed the form of speech and entered the mouth; the Wind God became vital wind forces of life called 'Pran' and entered through the nostrils. The Sun God transformed into sight (light) and entered the human body through the eye-balls; the various directions entered the hole of the ears in the form of powers to hear; the

vegetations and herbs assumed the shape of hairs and took abode on the skin (or they planted themselves on the soil represented by the skin of the body); the Moon God became 'Mana' (the mind and its inclinations, tendencies, ideas, dispositions, attractions etc.) and entered the heart; the Death God became the wind force called 'Apan' (that wind which passes through the intestines and the anus) and entered through the hole of the navel; the Lord's creative, generative, vital energy representing the Lord himself (and his vitality, his stupendous creative powers and unimaginable potential which are maverick and magical, unique and stupendous, fascinating and unprecedented in nature) entered through the genitals in the form of semen (4).

[Note :- (i) This semen was physically like the viscous primordial fluid from which the cosmos originally evolved. Hence, the semen is symbolically synonymous with the primordial cosmic fluid which had the stupendous and magnificent powers to generate and regenerate itself again and again. The sperm in the semen is the microcosmic counterpart of the macrocosmic Lord's creative energy, the so-called vital spark of life that ignited the chain reaction leading to the unfolding of this myriad vast cosmos. Whether that unfolding was a consequence of a single huge cosmic explosion, the big bang theory of creation, or was a gradual, subtle, imperceptible process like the slow development of an embryo in a mother's womb, is beside the point. The fact is that the initial process was started by the 'cosmic sperm' that floated in the 'cosmic semen' or the 'cosmic gel' and infused some life into it by its mere movement which represented the 'desire or wish' of the supreme Soul to create, and to show signs of life by its mere movement.

(ii) It is to be noted here that the various Gods that emerged from the various parts of the body of the 'Viraat Purush' as described in section 1 of this Canto made their abodes in a corresponding part of the body of the human being as described in this section. For example, the Fire God emerged from 'Viraat Purush's' mouth and he found abode in the mouth of the man. If we extend this corollary further, we conclude that the human body is also nothing else but an image of the 'Viraat Purush'.]

5. Then 'hunger' and 'thirst' said to the supreme Lord, 'Make arrangements for our shelter also as you have done for the other Gods'. The Lord replied, 'I shall bestow you with your share from amongst that of the Gods. Whatever offering is ever made to the Gods in the form of food, water, oblations during the fire sacrifice etc., both of you (hunger and thirst) shall have a share in them.'

[That is why, when the body gets nourishment in the form of food and drink, these two entities are also satisfied, though hunger and thirst are very necessary for the body because it enables it to desire to eat or drink at all in the first place. Another noteworthy point here is that the hunger and thirst were not assigned any specific organs. They were present as a natural phenomenon in all the organs of the creature. All the organs and tissues require nourishment, they feel the need for food, and this feeling of the need to replenish energy is manifested in the form of hunger and thirst.] (5).

[Note :- 'Who in the rainbow can draw the line where the violet tint ends and the orange tint begins? Distinctly we see the difference of colours, but where exactly does the first one blindingly enter into the other?'— Herman Melville.

How true! Though the Gods were assigned separate shelters in specific organs of the human body as their abode and domain, but a drawn line demarcating their areas of operation is impossible for they are blurred and overlapped at their fringes. For example,

the Fire God entered the mouth, but it is the fire that digests the food, keeps the body warm and ignites the functioning of the 'Pran'. It is essential for the body as a whole to live. Any foolish utterance from the mouth can create a backlash which makes the whole body suffer. Nevertheless, we assign separate duties to the Gods and their habitats that are the different organs of the body just for the sake of convenience of understanding. The Gods do not function in water tight, separate compartments. Their functions overlap and coalesce with each other, and they are interdependent and work in concert for the proper functioning of the body.]

Canto 1/Section 3

The life forces are sustained by the intake of food; the entry of the supreme Brahm (the macro cosmic Soul) himself inside the human body; the query of the man about his true identity and his experiencing of the true nature of his pure self leading to contentedness and bliss— all these are described in this section.

1. The supreme Lord thought to himself, 'The entire cosmos (here referring to the habitat world) and its guardian patron Gods have been created (or established) by me. Now it is necessary to create food for them, for their sustenance.' (1).
2. Deciding thus, the supreme Lord heated the primordial fluid (vi~—literally, 'water') consisting of the 5 basic (nutritional) elements present in its viscous jelly like form. The heating process activated these elements, and from the formless/shapeless fluid took shape what was to become the food for the Gods. This food had a physical, gross and tangible form (2).

[Note :- (i) It is to be noted here that the first creation made by the supreme Soul was also out of the shapeless and formless jelly-like primordial viscous fluid which was injected with the cosmic life-providing energy. It gradually condensed or coagulated to form the macrocosmic subtle body of the first embryonic cosmic male called 'Hiranyagarbh' who later developed various parts of the macrocosmic gross body called 'Viraat Purush'. Here it is evident that both the man as well as the food was created by the supreme Lord out of the same primordial fluid which was used by him to create 'Hiranyagarbha' and 'Viraat Purush'. Hence, the basic ingredients of the vast cosmos (the macrocosm) as well as the individual man and the food on which he survives (the microcosm) are absolutely the same and identical.

(ii) To understand and visualise the basic physical process involved in what might have happened in the beginning, a layman can take the example of the water which is the very first requirement of life. When the stagnant water is heated, it shows signs of activity because the water molecule nearer to the source of heat rise up and the colder portion of the water sinks to the bottom; these are the convection currents in water on being heated. This will help explain the initial process as described in the verses which refer to the heating of the primordial fluid. Next, when the water is cooled towards the freezing point, it begins to become more viscous and thicker in its texture, and ultimately it solidifies as ice which symbolically represents the gross body of the creature. By extension, when ice melts, it reverts back into its primary form of water. Similarly, upon death, the gross body of the creature disintegrates into the 5 basic elements from which it was formed. Again, even as further analysis of water shows that it basically consists of 2

atoms of hydrogen and 1 atom of oxygen (H₂O), the primordial cosmic fluid also consisted of the 5 basic elements such as earth, fire, water, wind and space.]

3. Fearing that the Gods would annihilate it by eating it and hence destroying its very existence, the food created by the Lord tried to escape from their clutches by running away from the Lokpals to escape extinction and death. Consequentially, when the man (human being), who was a gross manifestation of the cosmic conscious soul, tried to catch and eat it through his faculty of speech (i.e. through his tongue), he failed to do so. Had he been successful in doing so then, even today a man would have quenched his hunger by merely uttering the name of a particular food he wished to eat, instead of physically eating it and getting his appetite (hunger) satisfied (3).

4. Then that man tried to catch hold of food by his vital wind forces (i.e. by his breath; he tried to smell it, suck the food in through his nostrils and feel satisfied of hunger), but failed again. Had he been successful in his endeavour then, even today a man would have been able to quench his hunger and thirst simply by smelling the food or drink, instead of physically eating or drinking it respectively (4).

5. Then the man tried to partake food by simply seeing it (i.e. he attempted to get nourishment and energy by just looking at his desired food items), but he failed once again. Had he been successful in doing so then, he would have derived the satisfaction and nourishment provided by food or drink simply by looking at them even today (5).

6. Again, he tried to eat through his ears, but failed to do so once more. Had that first human being been successful in eating food through his faculty of hearing (i.e. through his ears), even today people would have felt satisfied by simply hearing about food, instead of actually eating it (6).

7. Thereafter that man tried to accept food through his skin and was unsuccessful again. Had his efforts being successful then, even today people would have derived satisfaction, nourishment and strength simply by touching the food and drink (7).

8. Then the man tried to grab his food through his heart and mind, but his efforts to do so proved in vain. Had he been able to do it then, even today people would have had the benefit of deriving satisfaction and nourishment from food and drink simply by thinking of them (8).

9. Then the man tried to accept food by the means of his excretory and genital organs, but it proved to be a futile exercise. Had he been successful then, even today a man would not have felt contented and relieved after having expelled the ingested food items through his anus as stools, through his urinary organs as urine, and through his genitals as sperms (9).

10. At last, the man tried to take in food through his mouth using the 'Apan Vayu' (i.e. the wind force which passes through the intestines from the mouth right up to the anus; it helps in moving the food down through the intestinal tract by the peristaltic movement).

He was successful in ingesting food through this medium. Hence, it is the 'Apaan Vayu' which is responsible for the intake of food and drink, and thereby sustaining and protecting the life of the creature (10).

[Note :- This vital wind called 'Apaan' is also known as 'Annayu' meaning 'the wind which enables the creature to protect its life through the medium of food and drink'. Sage Shankaracharya has described 'Apaan' as 'the opening of the mouth'.]

11. The supreme Lord, who had created the first man, thought to himself, 'If this man is able to speak with his faculty of speech (tongue), is able to smell with his wind forces called 'Pran' (the breath passing through the nostrils), is able to see with his eyes, hear with his ears, touch and feel with his skin, think with his mind, ingest food with his 'Apaan' wind force (through his mouth) and complete his excretory functions through his excretory organs (such as anus, urinary and genital organs)— say, then, what function will I be left with to do (i.e. what will I do if everything is controlled by the man himself or the patron Gods of his organs; how will I control him? He might become a monster and supersede my authority. I will become secondary, subservient and subordinate to my own creation. This will create a ridiculous situation which will be preposterous for the whole creation).

Hence, from where should I enter him (or how should I manage to somehow sneak in and sit in the driver's seat to control and drive this vehicle from getting reckless and belligerent and head towards a catastrophic accident)? That is, how should I make my entry in the body of the man like the other Gods have done, and control his activities from there? (11)

12. Wandering thus, the supreme Lord (Brahm) decided to enter the body of the man through his head (skull) at a point call Brahma-randhra by splitting it into two to create a hair-line crevice for his entry. It is therefore called the 'split entry point' (Vidriti). It is this part of the body of a man which enables him to experience the supreme bliss of God-realisation. This is the place where the supreme Brahm resides. In other words, Brahm is to be found no where else besides the very body of the creature itself (i.e. the man himself). The location of Brahm's habitat on the top of the head (i.e. the top of brain) indicates that he (Brahm) is like a crown of the body of a man— the glory, majesty, exalted stature, importance and intellectual reach and prowess of a man is due to the presence of the supreme Brahm in his head like a crown on the head of a king, and this differentiates an enlightened, wise, sagacious, adroit and erudite man from a morally depraved, mentally pervert and intellectually bankrupt and degenerate man who is nothing less than a monster, a beast, as it were. This factor also differentiates a wise man from an animal (12).

[Note :- The metaphysical habitat where the supreme Brahm can be symbolically found are the following—

- (i) The navel representing the physical body of the creature because it is here that the umbilical cord of an embryo is attached to its mother at the time of its creation in the womb.
- (ii) The heart representing the pulsating, vibrant cosmos; also called the 'Mana'.
- (iii) The mind or the brain representing the casual body of the creature.

(iv) The top of the head which represents the heavens, or the fathomless space of the cosmos. We must also note that the residence of Brahm in the heart is in a divine lotus whose filament is bent like an inverted 'U', while that in the top of the head is in the shape of a cloud which fills the whole space available to it. These are the various approaches to understand the same entity depending upon the mental caliber of the student/aspirant/seeker. Those who are more emotional than rational see Brahm in their heart, while those who have an opposite tendency, i.e. who apply their logic and rationale to judge anything, see Brahm in the head.

Further, the creature has three levels of existence—

- (i) The waking state in which the Atma/soul interacts with the external world through the gross body of the creature,
- (ii) The dream state in which the Atma interacts with the mind-intellect complex of the creature called the subtle body while the external world ceases to exist for all practical purposes, and
- (iii) The deep sleep state where the Atma withdraws itself even from the mind-intellect apparatus and remains secluded within its own confines called the casual body of the creature.]

13. When that man observed the spectacularly myriad and vast world around him, he was astonished and dumb founded. He wondered who had created it, because it was surely not his own creation. Therefore, there must be someone, the man reasoned to himself, who must have created this stupendous and marvelously magnificent cosmos. And since the basic elements of the creation were the same elementary building blocks of life which were used to create the man himself, he concluded that there was an inherent similarity with him and the cosmos. He also concluded that the supreme authority that created all this is the supreme Brahm, and he observed that since no other animate or inanimate part of the creation was as enlightened, wise, capable and potent as him, the man deduced that he (the man) was that supreme Brahm. This realisation filled him with thrill and exhilaration, contentedness and bliss (13).

[Note :- Such a realised man wasn't a hypocrite; he wasn't egoistic or haughty or arrogant. He merely realised the basic truth of creation, and this filled him with humility. But those with pervert and lowly intellect became otherwise; they became arrogant and haughty, leading to their ultimate downfall.]

15. Thus, the conscious soul, which had assumed the form/body of a human being, was able to realise who the supreme Brahm was (i.e. it realised its true identity, nature and origin). Hence, the first man (or man-like entity) was called 'Idandra' meaning 'I have seen and observed it'. [That is, I have realised the truth.] But the 'Gods' began calling him Indra for the sake of convenience because they prefer to remain subtle and hidden from view (14).

[Note :- This verse indicates that the first God who would be Lord of all other Gods and to whom all of them would be subordinate, was called Indra. The man was called Indra because he was the most evolved of the entire creation that the Lord had created.]

Canto 2:

Sage Vamdeo experiences the cycle of birth and death; entry of the creature in a mother's womb, its birth as an living being, and his re-entry into another womb after death.

1. The creature's first appearance is in the form of sperms floating in the primordial fluid of the semen present inside the body of the male. This semen is the extract (juice, essence) from all the parts of the father and it is endowed with similar energy, strength, potent, vitality and vigour as the father. [Scientifically, the sperm carries the genes of the father. Metaphorically, the sperm is the primordial cosmos while the semen is the primordial fluid from which the cosmos originated]. It is nourished inside the body of the father even as a mother nourishes an embryo in her womb. Then the male transplants that well nourished, robust, vital and active sperm into the womb of the mother— this is how the creature takes its first birth (1).

[Note :- The chromosomes and the DNA structure of the sperms are the carriers of the original traits of the father onto his offspring. By extension, each son carries the genes of his father and passes it to his next generation. Similarly, each creature of this vast cosmos carries the genes of the supreme father called Brahm inside its being. The mother, in the case of the cosmos, is Mother Nature.]

2. That implanted semen becomes a part of the body of the mother and she nourishes it like other parts of her body. She does not feel inconvenient or discomfort due to the presence of an external body inside her self (2).

3. The mother who sustains the creature is herself sustained by the husband. She nourishes the creature before birth while the father takes care of him after birth. The father is expected to take care of the creature (the child) because that is the process by which the various Lokas (worlds) are sustained, protected, propagated, enhanced and populated. This is called the creature's second birth.

[That is, the sperm of the father was its subtle form while the infant child, after emerging into the world, is its gross form] (3).

4. The son is like an image of his father— he carries his father's genes. When the son grows old, the father initiates him into all the affairs of the world and infuses in him all the traits and characteristic features that he himself had previously got from his own father. Thus, the son is established as a representative of his father.

In due course of time, the father dies and leaves behind his worldly responsibilities as well as the opportunity to carry forward his peculiar traits and genes to future generations to his son. The father himself, upon death, takes another birth and enters another womb— this is his (creature's) third birth. This relocation to another womb depends upon the accumulated effects of the deeds done by him during the present life as well as the integrated effects of all the deeds done by him in his previous lives taken together (4).

5. Sage Vamdeo had realised these facts while he was still in his mother's womb. He observed, 'Ah! How fortunate I am that I have understood the secret of creation of the various Gods such as Indra etc. as well as the pure inner self which is an abode of the supreme Soul or Brahm. Up till now, I was a prisoner in iron cages symbolising the

hundreds of bodies that I had entered in all my previous birth. [I had a misconception that those bodies were my true forms and identities, whereas in fact they were like iron cages which had trapped me like a bird in captivity.]

Now I have acquired the elementary, essential and truthful knowledge about the supreme reality. This knowledge or awareness is called ‘Tattva Gyan’. Hence, I have gained spiritual strength relying on this supreme knowledge (Gyan) and have broken through the cage like a hawk/falcon wanting to soar high into the open sky, full of bliss and joy of freedom. I have freed my self (and my soul) from the fetters of ignorance that had been shackling me till now (5).

6. That sage Vamdeo took birth, and in due course of time, he left his mortal coil and rose to the high stature of taking residence in the heaven where he enjoyed all divine comforts and pleasures behooving his exalted stature, and ultimately obtained the elixir of eternity and bliss called ‘Amrit’ (i.e. he attained emancipation and salvation) (6).

Canto 3

The earlier two Cantos described the existence of two Atmas— one is the supreme Soul called Brahma who created this vast cosmos, and the other is the soul of the individual creature who was a creation of Brahma and was infused with his divine energy even as a son is bestowed with his father’s traits and characteristic features in the form of the latter’s genes. In this Canto, the questions ‘who is that worthy soul, what is his form and nature, and how to recognise him or what is his true identity’ are answered in brief.

1. To understand and recognise who that supreme Soul was, what was his essential and truthful form and nature, and how to identify him, some erudite, sagacious, wise, adroit and enlightened persons discussed the matter thus— ‘Who is that Atma that is worshipped and adored by us? What or which is that primary life-giving force which enables us to see, to hear, to smell, to speak and to taste?’ (1).

2. All the vitality, consciousness, energy and signs of life that a creature displays are nothing else but a manifestation, a revelation and an extension of that supreme, transcendental authority called the Brahm. They are all indicative of, irrefutable proof of the majestic powers, magnificent glories and stupendous potentials of that supreme authority. They collectively prove that there is some vital moving force that instills life into the otherwise inane, inert and lifeless world.

They (the wise sages who had discussed the matter) deduced that the heart is the ‘inner self’ of the creature and it is correlated with the mind, and the two work together in coordination with each other. Collectively they are called ‘Mana’. This duo (heart and mind) has a third component called ‘the intellect’ (Buddhi) which acts as a supervisor putting a leash on their activities. The intellect is directly ordered by the Atma (soul) and it has the discerning powers to discriminate between what is good and what is not.

The trio forms an instrument which is called the heart-mind-intellect complex. It exhibits signs of life or consciousness— such as the ability to order and rule over others, the ability to discriminate, deduce and analyse, the powers to comprehend and understand

whatever is observed, seen or heard, the powers to store the inputs of the external world, which the mind receives through the organs of perception for future reference and their corresponding utility in the form of 'experience' (which is actually a data-bank or a referral library for the Atma), the powers to have insight, the ability to have patience and courage, the potential to decide on any subject or any course of action, the powers to think and contemplate, the stupendous agility of speedy access to experience in order to analyse and to project the probable futures, the ability to readily shift from one subject to another, the powers to remember and recall, the powers to determine, to make firm vows and resolves, the ability to have desires, wishes and yearnings, the possession of vital forces of life (such as breath, heart beat, digestive, excretory and reproductive functions), and the ability to procreate etc..

All of them are vital signs of life. They reflect the superb potential of Brahm who had created the first man and had infused him with all these and such other traits and characteristics which are indicative of life (2).

3. They concluded that the soul of the creature, which is pure consciousness, enlightened and an embodiment of the supreme entity called Brahm, is the Lord of all creation. It is Brahma, it is Indra (Canto 1, section 3, verse no. 14) and it is Prajapati, the Lord of all the subjects of the creation. That supreme Soul is manifested/revealed in myriad forms as the various Gods, all the elements such as the earth, the water, the fire, the wind and the space, all the creatures such as those born out of a seed (e.g. plants), those born out of an egg (e.g. birds), those born from an embryo (e.g. mammals), those born out of sweat/perspiration on the skin (e.g. bacteria) and those born out of the soil/earth (e.g. worms) as well as those creatures which fall under the category of horses, cows, elephants and humans. In short, the entire animate as well as the inanimate creation is established in that supreme Soul known as Brahm.

This Brahm is pure consciousness personified; he is enlightened and an embodiment of all knowledge; he is the basic foundation of all creation; he is the cause as well as the ultimate destiny where the entire cosmos will dissolve in the end. He is the one who bestows strength, vitality, energy and powers to Indra and others. In brief, that supreme conscious factor of the cosmos is called Brahm (3).

4. That erudite, wise and enlightened sage Vamdeo as well as others like him, who are able to realise and understand the true nature of the supreme Brahm as described herein before in this Upanishad, are freed from the fetters shackling them to ignorance. They are liberated from this delusory and artificial world of illusions, and at the end, they leave their mortal coils (gross body) and rise up to the divine abode of the Lord himself. There they obtain all contentedness that they had ever hoped for, and ultimately accomplish that supreme state of being one with the supreme Brahm, a state which gives them immortality, eternity and bliss (4).

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2. (b) **The Mudgal Upanishad:--**

(Cantos 2-4)

Canto 2:

1. In this way, the stupendous, magnificent and majestic glories and fames (collectively called 'Vaibhava') of the Lord that has been enunciated in detail by the 'Purush Sukt' and expounded (in brief) by the first Canto of this 'Mudgalopanishad', had also been told by Lord Vasudeo (one of the names of Vishnu) to Indra, the king of Gods. But Indra wished to understand its subtle and finer meanings in their intricate details. So to hear it, he once again approached Vasudeo with a bowed head. The Lord gave Indra the profound but secret knowledge of that most sacred, auspicious and salutary 'Purush Sukt' in two chapters or sections (1).

2. 'Purush Sukt' has been divided into two sections. The 'Viraat Purush' (macrocosmic gross body of the super consciousness or the cosmos) who has been described in this 'Sukt' is beyond (i.e. does not have) any name, form and shape, and he transcends comprehension. Hence, he is incomprehensible for the creatures of the world. In order to eliminate and alleviate the various miseries and sorrows as well as to extend help to overcome the different suffering, torments and afflictions suffered by the Gods and other creatures of the creation, that 'Viraat Purush' abandoned his inaccessible, incomprehensible and un-attributed characteristics, and instead assumed 'shapes' with different but endless virtues and characteristic features. This he did to provide easy welfare to all the creatures.

[That is, though he had no tangible forms, attributes and visible characteristic features, but when he manifested or revealed himself with a 'definite shape and form' having attributes, characteristics, shapes and contours, he assumed so many qualities and attributes that it is impossible to keep a tag or account of them all.] This form of the manifested Lord has the potent to provide deliverance and salvation to the creature by the mere sight of it. He pervaded the whole earth as well as the other worlds as the immanent soul of the cosmos and spread or extended himself endlessly as far as the cosmos extended (2).

3. Before the beginning of the creation, the primordial male called 'Narayan' was the only one who existed in all the dimensions of time— the past, the present and the future. He is the only one who provides 'Moksha' (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) to all the creatures. He is the one who is the chief and the most exalted amongst those who are regarded as the most powerful, potent, strong and majestic ones. There is no one who is greater than him. He is the only one who has the honour to be called 'Almighty and invincible' (3).

4. The great Lord divided himself into 4 entities. Out of these, the 1st three (Vasudeo, Pradumna and Sankarshan) dwell in the supreme abode known as 'Vaikunth' (the abode

of Lord Vishnu). The 4th form was called 'Anirudha', and it was this from which created this vast creation (4).

[Note :- The primordial entity named Narayan cleaved himself into 4 parts or sections—Vasudeo, Pradumna, Sankarshan and Anirudha. Out of these, the 1st three were not revealed and remained un-manifested. Vasudeo was the one who gave shelter/refuge/abode to all; Pradumna was the one who is self-illuminated like the sun and he provided light or illumination to the world; Sankarshan was the one who attracted everything and everyone towards himself much like the magnetic field or the gravitational pull of the cosmos. These 3 forms remained concealed or hidden from view in subtle forms. The 4th form called Anirudha— which literally means 'one which could not be stopped from revealing himself'—manifested himself as this varied and myriad cosmos that is visible to us.]

5. This 4th variant or revelation of Narayan, who was the first, primary and the primordial male, first created 'Prakriti' (Nature) in order to initiate the process of creation. This 'Prakriti' was also known as Brahma, the creator. Brahma, in spite of coming into existence with the mandate of starting the process of creation, did not understand or could not unravel the mystery behind the process of creation. [That is, he did not know how to kindle the cosmic fire which will initiate, develop and take forward the process of creation.]

Hence, Narayan, in his form as 'Anirudha', instructed Brahma on the intricacies of creation and unraveled to him the mystery behind the process.

He said, 'Oh Brahmin! Consider all your organs of perceptions such as those of speech (and hearing, touching, smelling and seeing) as the ones who do or perform the ritual of the cosmic fire sacrifice. Consider your potentially powerful body that has emerged from the stem of the divine lotus as the offering to that cosmic fire sacrifice. Consider the spring season as the clarified butter, the summer season as the fire-wood and the winter season as the fruit, reward or juice of that fire sacrifice. Consider me as the 'fire'. By doing so, your body will acquire such stupendous strengths and powers that even 'Bajra' (thunderbolt; the weapon of Indra which is regarded as the toughest material in existence; the word also means diamond) will be alarmed and agitated by being merely touched by you. [That is, even such tough things as 'Bajra' will hold you in awe and fear.]

Thereafter, as a result or fruit of this great cosmic fire sacrifice, the entire spectrum of all the creatures will come into existence. This entire world—with its animate as well as inanimate inhabitants—will gradually reveal itself and become visible (5).

[Note :- Lord Narayan advised Brahma to offer his own body as the offering to the cauldron of the great cosmic fire sacrifice kindled to initiate the process of creation. This is not a physical and actual offering but only a symbolic one. Ancient mystical texts have a lot of symbolism and metaphors, and their spirit should be understood along with the words because the latter can be totally misunderstood if not properly interpreted in the correct perspective. By offering one's body to the fire, one literally burns it, and along with the body burns all its faults and the crassness, the perversities and the grossness associated with it. If we take the example of gold, it is purified by putting it in fire. Sufferings and hardships beget spiritual perfection, elevation, refining and purity. This

was exactly why Jesus Christ suffered at the cross— it symbolically purified humanity of its evils and sins. Such burning or suffering or ‘Tapa’ does not kill; it instead transforms one from a gross and crass existence to a subtler, higher, finer, more sublime and elevated state of existence. This is the resurrection of Christ in terms of Vedantic philosophy ‘The sacrificial one should live again’ (Brihadaranyakya Upanishad, 3/9/28.7; Bible, Isaiah, 53/10), ‘And he said unto them, ye seek Jesus which was crucified; he is risen’ (Bible, Gospel St. Luke, 16/6).]

6. It also symbolically describes ‘Moksha’ by the union of ‘Jiva’ (creature) and Atma (spirit/soul) (6). Any seeker/aspirant who understands the subtle and sublime meaning and process of the initiation of the cosmos by the means of the cosmic fire sacrifice, and the real meaning and essence of ‘Moksha’ (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation), is able to live his life fruitfully till its natural end.

[That is, he consumes the entire length or period of time that is determined for his soul to live in the body of the creature in this world before it exhausts its energy or latent powers to remain active while being separate from the cosmic Soul from which the former had originated in the first place. As a result, it does not have to enter another body upon death to live the remaining ‘un-utilised part of the time’ that is destined for it. In other words, the seeker/aspirant finally breaks himself free from the cycle of seemingly endless transmigrations] (7).

[Note :- There is a lot of symbolism in the Upanishadic teachings. Great mystical truths are explained by means of metaphors and examples which must be properly understood to make their meaning clear. Otherwise they appear to be ridiculous. *‘They grope in darkness who worship this ignorant world.... but he who knows the secret of Nature.... he crosses death’— Swami Vivekanand, Complete Works, 2/154.*]

Canto 3

1. That Lord, who himself is without a birth, has revealed himself in myriad forms and pervaded all of them. These forms are as variable as the vastness of the creation. He keeps on taking birth in different forms again and again in this world (because the possibilities of permutations and combinations are immense) (1).

2. The same Lord (Viraat Purush) has been worshipped by all the exalted ones in the form of ‘Fire God’. Those who perform the fire sacrifice according to the process prescribed in the ‘Yajur Veda’ (or use the Yajur Veda as a text to do the sacrifice according to its procedures and follow its doctrines) consider that Lord as an embodiment and manifestation of the Veda itself. They deploy this concept while actually performing the sacrifice and the rituals associated with it.

[That is, they revere and honour the Yajur Veda as an embodiment of the ‘Viraat Purush’, perform the sacrifice by invoking him and do it according to his instructions. The offerings to the fire sacrifice pit are also symbolically made to him in his manifestation as the ‘Fire God’.]

Those who chant or sing the hymns of the ‘Sam Veda’ think that the Lord is the hymns or stanzas of that Veda personified.

[That is, they regard the hymns or verses of the 'Sam Veda' as one of the various manifestations of the supreme Lord.]

Verily, he is present everywhere (even in the form of the letters of the hymns of the Sam Veda).

The serpent accepts him as poison while the wise and erudite ones see a living being in that serpent. The Gods accept him in the form of 'Amrit' (elixir of eternity and bliss) while ordinary mortals regard him as their wealth which sustains them in their life. The non-Gods (i.e. demons, spirits, phantoms) regard him as 'Maya' (the power to create illusions), the 'Pittars' (spirit of dead ancestors) regard him as the 'Swadha' (food offered to dead ancestors), and devotees and worshippers of various deities and Gods perceive him as their respective objects of worship, adoration and devotion. The 'Gandharvas' (celestial musicians, dancers and singers; a form of demi-God) recognise him as beauty and glamour while the 'Apsaras' (celestial courtesans) treat him as the Gandharvas (i.e. as their celestial male partners) (2).

3. That supreme Truth and absolute Reality assumes a form, a meaning, a connotation, an interpretation, an existence and a countenance according to the requirements, perceptions, emotions, desires and needs of those who seek him, worship him and adore him with a given set of subtle or physical, intellectual or mental variables and circumstances. Hence, those who are wise, erudite and enlightened should realise and come to the conclusion in their hearts that the complete, whole, immutable and un-fractionable supreme 'Purush' is none other than the seeker/aspirant himself.

[That is, there is no distinction between the truthful identity of the seeker/aspirant, which is his soul/Atma/spirit, and the supreme entity which pervades the whole cosmos. It is from this supreme entity that the cosmos has emerged and shall fall back into once again at the end of its tenure, and which is known by the name of Brahm. There is no scope of any duality between the 'self' and the myriad world seen/perceived around the seeker/aspirant, a world which is but a varied manifestation of the single, truthful identity called Brahm. And since a man is an image of the 'Supreme Purush', there is no duality between them.]

With this realisation, and by being steadfast and consistent in it, the seeker/aspirant attains that supreme form in due course of time (because 'you become what you think'). Any person who understands this mystery becomes similar to that supreme Truth which is Brahm (3).

Canto 4

1. That Brahm is the supreme Truth and absolute Reality, is devoid of, or free from, the sufferings inflicted by the 'Trairap' (the 3 torments which afflict the creature), is beyond the '6-Koshas' (gross forms that the basic elements of creation have formed), is without the '6-Urmis' (pains, agonies, afflictions, miseries) of a creature, is without the '5-Koshas' (sheaths or coverings of the soul), and is beyond the purview (i.e. the tainting effects) of the '6-faults' associated with a creature. In this way, the Brahm is unique, unparalleled, and one of its only kind in every conceivable way (1).

[Note :- The various terms used in this verse are explained below in the following verses.]

2. The 3 'Traitaps' mentioned above are the following— (i) Adhyatmic, (ii) Adhibhautic and (iii) Adhidaivic. The word 'Trividhum' also refers to the distinction between the three independent entities— (a) The doer, the act and the action, (b) Gyan (knowledge), the one who knows and the object of that knowledge, and (c) the sufferer or enjoyer, the suffering or enjoyment and the object which causes the suffering or is the source of that enjoyment. Though each entity in a particular group appears to be indistinguishable or inseparable from the other, in fact they are quite distinct from each other (2).

[Note :- (i) 'Adhyatmic' problems are those that the creature faces in his spiritual pursuits, (ii) 'Adhibhautic' problems are created by terrestrial creature like enemies, animals, kings, thieves, bodily afflictions etc., (iii) 'Adhidaivic' are the problems created by opposed Gods and malignant stars. (iv) The 'doer' is quite distinct from the 'work to be done' and the 'physical actions of doing that work' though all appear to be interlinked. The doer suffers misery if he gets involved in the actions, but he remains peaceful if he does the deed without any emotional attachment to it or its results. (v) Similarly, 'knowledge' links the 'seeker of knowledge' to the 'object of knowledge'. The seeker remains dissatisfied and agitated only till the time he does not realise his objective of acquiring full knowledge that he and Brahm are one. This knowledge removes all agitations and restlessness, and makes him peaceful and calm. (vi) In the same vein, a person suffers or enjoys only till he is attracted or affected by any circumstance or any object of the world which is the cause of his sufferings or enjoyments. As soon as he detaches himself from them, there is neither any misery nor any enjoyment for him.]

3. The 6 'Koshas' or gross body of the creature that holds its Atma/soul are the following—skin, flesh, bones, veins/nerves, blood and marrow (3).

4. The 6 enemies of a creature are the following— (i) Kaam (desires, lust, passion etc.), (ii) Krodh (anger, wrath, spite), (iii) Lobh (greed, rapacity, avarice, yearning), (iv) Moha (attachment, attraction, infatuation, ignorance, delusions), (v) Mada (arrogance, haughtiness, ego, pride, hypocrisy) and (vi) Matsarya (envy, jealousy, animosity, hatred, ill-will, malice) (4).

5. The 5 sheaths/coverings/veils/shrouds surrounding the Atma consists of the following—(i) Food (gross physical body), (ii) Pran (vital winds), (iii) Mana (mind, intellect and heart), (iv) Gyan (knowledge, wisdom, erudition and discrimination), and (v) Anand (meaning bliss and happiness) (5).

6. The 6 faults or flaws of the emotion of the creature are the following notions—(i) endearment, (ii) taking birth (coming into existence in this gross world; assuming a gross perishable body), (iii) to enhance, increase or develop, (iv) to change, (v) to decay, decompose, degenerate and become decrepit or to decline in stature, health, body, fame, development etc., and (vi) finally, destruction, conclusion, end or complete annihilation (6).

7. The 6 'Urmies' (pains, afflictions, agonies and sorrows) of the creature are the following—(i) hunger, (ii) thirst, (iii) misery/grief, (iv) Moha (attachment, infatuation, ignorance, delusion), (v) old age, and (vi) death (7).

8. The 6 'Bhrams' (delusions, misconceptions, miss-beliefs, falsehoods) are said to be the following—(i) race, (ii) clan, (iii) caste, (iv) creed, (v) Ashram (i.e. any one of the four principal divisions or phases of life)¹, and (vi) physical beauty of the body (8).

[Note—¹The four principle divisions of a man's life are the following: (i) 'Brahmcharya'—the first part of his life when he is young and is supposed to observe austerities while he studies and acquires knowledge to equip him to face the world when he grows up; (ii) 'Grihastha'—this is the second phase of life when a person marries and lives as a householder; (iii) 'Vaanprastha'—the third phase or division of life when a person prepares to hand the responsibilities of his worldly affairs to his heirs and mentally prepares himself to lead a calm and detached life so that he can get ready for the final phase of old age; and (iv) 'Sanyas'—the fourth and last phase when a person is expected to completely renounce the world and its entanglements, and instead spend the remaining part of his life in spiritual pursuit and searching ways for his spiritual liberation and deliverance.]

9. The various variables mentioned above (verse no. 1-8), in their myriad permutations and combinations, are the main causes why the supreme, transcendental Soul becomes like an ordinary mortal creature. There is no other alternative reason or cause for it (9).

[Note :- These verses enumerate the different faults and flaws which are inherent in a creature, some to a lesser and others to a greater degree. Since the faultless and flawless entity called Brahm has assumed the form of an ordinary creature, as a true 'actor' he has to live up to his assigned role as a creature of this world, complete with all the faults associated with such a creature. He has to play the role of a creature to the hilt, as it were. This is what any good actor should and is expected to do— to identify himself with the role model he is supposed to emulate as long as he is in the act of enacting that role. Brahm 'has' to behave like an ordinary mortal if he has to play the role of a creature truthfully and faithfully.]

10. Benefits :- Anyone who studies this Upanishad daily becomes as pure and incorruptible as the fire. He is deemed to be as pure as the wind. He is splendid, brilliant, radiant as well as fierce, potent and stupendous as 'Aditya' (Sun). He is free from every imaginable disease (i.e. taints, flaws, faults, blemishes, shortcomings, afflictions). He becomes well endowed and blessed with wealth and prosperity, sons and grandsons. He becomes wise, adroit, sagacious, erudite and expert. He is exonerated from great sins and misdemeanours of all kinds. He is freed from the sin of any bad behaviour that he might display as a son towards his mother. Any improper thoughts that might have arisen in him towards his daughter or sister are also forgiven. He is freed from the sin associated with the thought of stealing gold (and other kinds of wealth belonging to others). He is freed from the ill effects of forgetting what he has learned in the Vedas. He is freed from the sin of committing laxity, carelessness and lack of diligence and sincerity in the service of his 'Guru' (moral preceptor and teacher). He is freed from the sin of using impure offerings during the ritual of sacrifices. He is freed from the sin of eating

things which are not meant to be eaten. He is also freed from the sin of giving and accepting charity or alms which are considered abhorable and unacceptable. He is freed from the sin of lasciviousness, having lustful views and amorous thoughts about other people's woman folk.

He is not shackled to the sins generated by 'Kaam' (lust, passion etc.), 'Krodh' (anger etc.), 'Lobh' (greed etc.), 'Moha' (delusions, ignorance etc.), 'Mada' (arrogance etc.), 'Matsarya' (malice, envy) etc.. [See verse no. 4 also.]

Such a person is freed from all sins, becomes holy and purified, cleansed and purged of all his sins and faults in this very life itself by acquiring the pristine pure knowledge of the supreme, infinite, transcendental, all pervading, immanent, omniscient and pure Truth called the 'supreme Purush' (or the macrocosmic supreme Soul), and consequentially, he becomes an embodiment of the holy, pure and divine 'Purush' himself (10).

[Note :- The meaning of the above verse should be understood in the correct perspective. The Upanishadic sage does not mean that a person has got the licence to commit sin, misdeeds, promiscuity, misdemeanours, perversity etc. of all kinds because he is assured of being exonerated of all sins or absolved of all punishments if he reads a particular Upanishad or chants a particular 'Mantra'. No one is above the law of nature— 'You reap what you sow'. What then is the actual message of this Upanishad?

The answer is that once a person diverts his mind from the affairs of the world which is fault ridden, and acquires truthful knowledge about the absolute realities and turns towards the path of righteousness, and this quest should be made with sincerity and honesty, he will automatically have an inherent change of heart. He will not allow his legs or hands any more to touch muck in the first place, as it were, so there will be no question of washing the filth off them later on. Though he will have to go through the pains and endure the results of his already done deeds, but he will endure them dispassionately, and will not indulge in newer misdeeds. So, the cycle of deeds and their results will gradually slow down and finally come to an end; the chain will have been broken.

The last line of the above verse explains the concept very clearly— by acquiring truthful knowledge, the seeker becomes holy and pure, all his sins are purged and he is cleansed of them and their effects. A careful reading of the various faults associated with this mundane world vis-à-vis the creature as enumerated in verse nos. 1-9 will show that it is not so easy to overcome them. It requires commitment, resolve, patience and sincere efforts and constant/persistent practice to do so. The sincere realisation that these are indeed the cause of all the problems for the seeker will induce and impel him to avoid them like they were a plague, as it were. This desire has to genuinely germinate in his heart and not thrust upon him.]

11. In this way, the subtle meaning of this 'Purush Sukt' is very sublime and profound, of great import and is a great mystery as well. This 'Sukt' is more strange and mysterious, and it has a deeper and profounder import than the greatest of state secrets, the secret of Gods and more grave than the gravest of mysteries. Those who have not been initiated by a wise Guru (i.e. those who do not have a scholarly and erudite teacher or guide) should not be taught or preached or told about it because either they will not understand it, or misunderstand, misinterpret and misconstrue it and consequentially become cynical. It should also not be preached or told to those people who do not ask questions with a sincere and honest desire to learn more on the subject and clarify their doubts and remove

confusions in this matter, thinking that they are too scholarly, wise and learned themselves, Neither should it be taught to those who have not done the ritual of the fire sacrifice, to those who are not 'Vaishnavs' (follower/devotees of Lord Vishnu), to those who are not worthy, eligible or competent to hear and learn this 'Sukt', to those who talk a lot and speak ill of others (i.e. are chatter boxes who indulge in meaningless and futile talk, and indulge in criticism and finding faults with everything), to those who do not read the Vedas at least once a year, to those who are not contented and satisfied, and to those who have not discussed and preached the tenets and the principles of the Vedas themselves (11).

12. An erudite, wise, knowledgeable and expert teacher who is himself well versed in the Vedas should quietly teach this Upanishad to a disciple who has sincerely come near him to learn it. It should be done in a pure, sanctified and holy place (i.e. a place which is calm, pleasant and generally conducive to contemplation and study), during a proper time, and after purifying oneself by doing 'Pranayam' (a Yoga exercise which helps in controlling the breath; meditation and cleansing the body by controlling of the vital wind forces of life as well as by thinking constantly of the supreme Lord).

The meaning of the 'Sukt' should be politely uttered in the right ear of the disciple. There should not be much talk (or irrelevant, unnecessary explanations and unsought for clarifications; it should be to the point and precise) because otherwise this pristine knowledge contained in the 'Sukt' will be polluted and diluted with the faults of 'being without any essence and sound meaning, creating a lot of confusion leading to futile discussions and talking of non-essential matters'. The meaning of this 'Sukt' should be made abundantly clear by numerous sessions of teachings and repeated elaborations and necessary clarifications.

[That is, the meaning should be explained only to a disciple who is eager to learn about it, and not to anyone who is pervert, unscrupulous, careless and insincere because he would ridicule it in his stupidity and erroneous perceptions, leading to confusion, scepticism, schism, perplexity and confoundness in the mind of those who are not yet fully wisened and are still in a learning stage. The teacher should initiate only sincere disciple by pronouncing this 'Purush Sukt' in his ears.]

Such a disciple as well as his teacher become synonymous with the supreme 'Purush' (i.e. they become as holy, divine, pure, wise, omniscient and powerful with spiritual strength as the supreme 'Purush' himself) in this very life itself. This is the teaching and secret of this Upanishad (12).

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Chapter 3

The Revelation of Creation according to The Upanishads of the Sam Veda

3. (a) The Chandogya Upanishad:--

(Canto 3, Section 19; Canto 4, Section 17, verse nos. 1-3; Canto 6, Sections 2-10)

Canto 3, Section 19

1. 'Aditya (the Sun) is Brahm' —this is the conclusive judgment after deep investigation. [That is, the sages and seers decided that amongst all the metaphors and analogues that could be used to give an idea of how Brahm looks, the most appropriate was the Sun with its blinding and dazzling splendour.]

There are various ways in which it (Brahm) is described. In the beginning it was invisible, but thereafter, in due course of time, it became apparent. It developed into an egg-shape which grew, matured and at proper time after one year, it hatched. It split into two parts—one was silvery and the other was golden in colour (1).

[Note :- (i) One Samvatsar means one year. This was the time the primordial cosmic egg took to mature and hatch. The Sun was the catalyst of life. It injected energy and vitality, warmth and heat into the cosmic fluid that was fermented and coagulated, as it were, to produce myriad life forms.

(ii) 'Brahm' is a neuter gender. For once, it is the entity which has life as well as no life. If the former is considered, Brahm should be addressed with the pronoun 'he', while if the latter is considered, the pronoun will be 'it'. Further, Brahm represents the macrocosmic Male aspect of Nature, and his first manifestation was 'Hiranyagarbha' from whom the 'Viraat Purush' emerged. This 'Viraat Purush' is the macrocosmic gross but invisible Male aspect of creation. So, with this consideration, Brahm is addressed with the pronoun 'he' and not as 'she'. The divine cosmic energy which initiated the process of creation was a product of Brahm, it was created by Brahm. Another form that this energy took was Nature in whose womb the seeds of the entire creation were sown. Hence, 'Nature' is addressed by the pronoun 'it' or 'she'. If the Nature is taken in a gross form in its inanimate form, the pronoun 'it' is used, while if it is treated as the harbinger of life, bubbling with it, as the 'Mother', then the pronoun 'she' is used for it indicating its motherly nature.]

2. The 'silvery part' of that egg metamorphosed into the earth, and the 'golden part' transformed itself into the sky or the heavens, known as the Duloka. The 'chorion' of that primitive egg became the mountains, the 'amnion' became the dense cloud-like fog, the 'allantoids' became the rivers, and the 'amniotic fluid' became the oceans (2).

[Note :- This verse shows that the sage who envisioned and enunciated this Upanishad was well-versed in embryology. The technical terms used here show that he knew what lay inside the shell of the egg. It is not a layman's cup of tea, as it were, to describe the intimate details of the various parts of an egg as has been done here. Only an expert can use these metaphors which are however most appropriate.]

3. What emerged or hatched from that egg upon maturity was Aditya or the Sun. As soon as the Sun was born, there was a tremendous loud bang, and from this explosion emerged all the creatures as well as all the other material things and objects which they would eventually need to survive. That is why a resounding clutter of loud cacophonous noise is produced at the time of its (sun's) rising and setting in the horizon. Besides this noise, it is the time when the different creatures and the various things or objects of their use are also produced or enhanced in quantity and quality (3).

[Note :- (i) This verse clearly supports the 'big bang theory of creation of the universe' some 14 billion years ago. The 2006 noble prize for physics was awarded precisely for this work. After the initial blast having a temperature of 3000°C , the universe cooled down to -273°C . This supported the theory that the universe is expanding. Temperature variations in space provided clues to the formation of stars, planets, galaxies etc. as matter cooled and coalesced with each other. The similarity between this scientific view and the view expressed by the sage or seer of this Upanishad is very stark indeed. This shows that the wise and erudite sages of the period when the Upanishadic treatises were conceptualised and preached were highly accomplished scholars in various sciences— be it metaphysics, philosophy, psychology, astronomy, astrology, cosmology, physics, chemistry, biology and the medical sciences, or the physical practices of meditation and contemplation called Yoga which were physical training exercises in modern terminology which enabled them to focus their attention on the subject they were studying. The 'big bang theory' suggests that the cosmic explosion flung so much debris all around that it spread as far afield as the breadth and length of the universe. Some, not all, breeded life, of which earth was the dwelling place of the most stupendous and fascinating variety of living creatures —right from the single cell bacteria and amoeba up to the complex structure of the human being.

(ii) The fact that the 'Sun' is a cosmic nuclear reactor is well known. The Upanishad sage or seer went far back into its (sun's) creation and visualised a scenario when the reaction was first started. The nuclear fusion reaction that powers the Sun and other such stars involves confining hydrogen under extreme temperature and pressure to create a highly energetic gas of helium neutron leftovers, and this process releases a large amount of energy in the form of heat, light, electromagnetic radiation etc.. It indeed must have taken a typical nuclear fusion reaction leading to a thermonuclear explosion which set off the chain reaction which still makes the sun burn and shine as it does. Scientist have calculated that when this hydrogen fuel of the sun is exhausted, the sun will expand like a hot balloon, engulfing the entire solar system and its planets, reducing them to cinders and finally collapsing back into itself to become a glowing 'red dwarf star', if not a 'black hole'! There will be 'tremendous explosion' at that time also. This is exactly what the sage or seer means to say in verse no. 3 here —that a resounding, thundering, reverberating loud bang or noise is produced both at the time when the sun rises (i.e. when it makes its presence felt, which means when it was created) as well as at time when it sets (which refers to the time when the sun is finally finished). We must

remember that the cycle of creation and destruction continues like a 'pulse' —i.e. increasing and decreasing in rhythm. So, after one sun is finished or exhausted of its energy leading to its death and decay, the processes of nature will create another sun which will also die one day. So the axiom or maxim propounded in the above verse is absolutely true.

(iii) It is observed that after the peace of the night, there is a clutter of noises at dawn time and a flurry of activities. As the day progresses, all the creatures move out of their dens and go out for their respective worldly occupations. At sunset the cattle, birds, peasants, animals etc. all start returning to their respective homes for the night, creating another set of clamorous cacophony. As the night falls, silence descends upon the earth once again. So the noise produced at sun rise and sun set times also refer to this noise produced by the 'world waking up from sleep' and 'returning home after a day's hard toil' respectively.]

4. In this way, those who treat the Sun as the visible manifestation of the (supreme, transcendental, invisible, attribute-less, featureless, formless, omnipotent, subtle and sublime) Brahm and worship it, adore it, honour it, praise it and pray to it as such, are able to witness that cosmic Naad or divine sound (represented by the word OM and called Pranav). This bestows the person with joy and happiness, bliss, felicity and beatitude of all kinds (4).

[Note :- The person who has a developed intellect will be the person who can think in these enlightened terms. Stupid ignorant persons don't have the time and inclination to dwell in these matters. Being wise, learned, erudite and scholarly, any intelligent, discriminating person will not limit himself to reading one particular text of any Upanishad or one canto in isolation. He will read and read, imbibing as much knowledge as he can in this lifetime, because acquisition of knowledge is the one and only factor which distinguishes a learned man from other creatures of Brahma's creation. Then he will surely have read those Upanishads (e.g. Naad Bindu, Yog Chudamani etc.) which proclaim that the high knowledge of Brahm enables a person to hear the cosmic Naad, or the background noise prevalent in the universe, that is still reverberating and echoing in the cosmos after that 1st explosion described in verse no. 3 of this section. Any person who has stood alone near a high tension electric overhead cable in a lonely, calm and quiet place will have witnessed a deep humming and resonating sound emanating from the electric towers over which the wire or the cable of electricity passes. Isn't it ample proof that 'energy produces sound'?

Of course, here Brahm is 'energy personified as the Sun', and no wonder than that it produces a cosmic sound or noise as it traverses across the sky. As the Sun progresses across the sky, especially during hot summer afternoons in India, it is observed that the wind rises gradually and at noon it gathers speed to, more often than not, produce a swift breeze creating a whistling, wheezing or a soft howling sound against the ear drums. As the evening hours approach, this sound of the wind ceases as the wind itself calms down. It is also known that the electromagnetic winds being blown out from the Sun in the form of the 'solar wind' also effect electromagnetic transmission. So, the ancient sages used terminology that was in vogue in those days to explain the scientific facts which we know to be true in modern times also.]

Canto 4/Section 17

[The previous section says that speaking by the chief priest called Brahm during the morning prayers of the fire sacrifice causes disruption of the sacrifice. In this section, the genesis of creation is briefly mentioned with emphasis on the fire sacrifice. The method or process to rectify any error committed inadvertently during the rituals has been described, besides the importance of carefully selecting the lead priest to preside over the rituals.]

1. In order to extract the essential juice or the truthful essence from the 3 Lokas (worlds), Prajapati Brahma (the creator) did severe Tapa (penances, austerities and keeping stern religious vows and suffering hardships for some noble cause). As a result of his Tapa, the essence of the 3 Lokas was extracted by him. From the earth was produced 'the fire', from the 'Antariksha' (the space between the earth and the sun; the solar system; the sky) was produced 'the wind', and from the 'Duloka' (the heavens; the deeps space beyond the solar system) was produced 'Aditya' (the heavenly sun; the Sun-God) (1).

2. He further did more Tapa to extract the refined essence from these primary essences or elements —thus, from the fire was produced the Rig Veda, from the wind was produced the Yajur Veda, and from the Aditya was produced the Sam Veda (2).

3. Not satisfied with it, he continued with his Tapa to further extract the more refined essences from these Vedas, essences which were more distilled than the earlier ones. This distilled form extracted from these three repositories of knowledge called 'Trividya', were the following—from the verses of the Rig Veda emerged the primary word 'Bhu', from the verses of the Yajur Veda emerged the primary word 'Bhuvaha', and from the Sam Veda verses emerged the primary word 'Swaha' (3).

Canto 6/Section 2

1. Shwetketu's father preached him—'My dear gentleman! In the beginning there was only the unique 'Truth' which had no parallel and which was one and the only one of its kind. Some people assert that in the beginning there was no such separate and distinct 'Truth'. In fact, what existed was a unique entity that was 'neutral'. It was, so to say, neither 'Truth' nor 'non-Truth'. In this aspect, it was matchless, unique, unparalleled, and one of its only kind. Out of this 'neutral' entity was produced, or from it emerged or derived, the 'ultimate truth' (1).

[Note :- Does the phrase 'in the beginning' imply that 'it is not at the present'? That is, the 'Truth' was present in the beginning of creation, but does that mean that 'it is not present now'? Well, the 'Truth' is indeed present now as it was then, and it will be in the future. But that 'Truth' has been veiled by layers after layers of delusions, ignorance and misconceptions about its reality. If we consider the examples of clay, gold and iron given in section 1 of this canto above, we would realise what is the implied meaning. The clay, gold or iron are present in the new forms that these raw materials take, but we forget to call them by their original name of clay, gold or iron, and instead we call the newer things into which these basic ingredients have converted themselves by their new names.

Similarly, when the truth was in a 'raw form', it was called the 'Truth'. But as creation evolved, that universal truth assumed so many different and myriad forms, having as many names, shapes, sizes and characteristic features, exhibiting infinitely numerous qualities and other accouterments that have become the object of umpteen number of perceptions leading to myriad views, myriad hues and shades of intellect and thought processes so much so that the main 'gem' has been lost in the jungle of glittering glass pieces, as it were. If the artificiality of the dazzle created by these glass pieces is removed, the seeker of the 'truth' will find the 'gem'. The illusions about 'truth' lead to delusions about its authenticity, its veracity, its very existence. Hence, the 'truth' appeared to be imaginary, or 'non-truth'. When some wise sage or seer analysed that debate about what was the truth and what was the non-truth, he came to the stunning conclusion about the 'ultimate truth'. It's like a theorem in geometry or a formula in algebra where ideas are proved beyond doubt by using step-by-step logical progression. This is what is meant by the emergence of the 'ultimate truth' in the above verse.]

2. Oh gentleman! But how can it be? How can 'truth' be born out of 'non-truth'? Oh dear gentleman! In reality, there was only this one and unique 'Truth' in the beginning, and nothing else (2).

3. That invisible, abstract 'truth' decided to manifest or reveal itself in different forms to make itself visible and tangible. With this decision a 'Tej', which is a glorious effulgence of radiant divine energy, was produced from that subtle and sublime 'truth' instantly. The Tej then decided to become 'numerous and multiply'. Instantly, the Tej produced the element known as 'Apah' or water element. Therefore, when anyone is under stress and duress, he is inclined to sweat or perspire. It is the agitation and heat caused by the stress or duress that produces water in the form of sweat drops on the skin (3).

[Note :- We see here that the 'ultimate truth' was peaceful when it had no desires or yearnings. A simple and harmless and almost innocuous desire to become visible, tangible and verifiable by assuming different forms led to a chain of developments—first 'Tej', which is synonymous with heat and energy, was produced; this created 'agitation and restlessness', and to calm this agitation, the coolant 'water' was produced. The root cause of agitation was the 'desire' that Truth had. If Truth did not have any desire, there would have been no 'Tej', and no agitation requiring the need for a coolant, the water. Hence, when there is no desire, there is no agitation in anyone. The profound meaning of this verse is—'Root cause of all agony and sorrows in this world is to have any desires or expectations'. Without any such inclination of the mind, there will be complete peace.]

4. Next, that water element (Apaha) decided that it should manifest or reveal itself in different forms. It consequentially produced 'food' (Anna) in its different myriad forms on this earth. That is the reason why wherever there is an abundance of rainfall, there is abundance in growth of food and vegetation of different varieties. Hence, all varieties and variations of food have their origin in water (or, in other words, it is the water that is the progenitor of food, it is the water without which food cannot be produced) (4).

[Note :- Earlier, in canto 5, section 4 we have learnt that the Gods made the first offering by purely mental devotion and faith in the symbolic cosmic fire sacrifice done with the express purpose of starting creation. This mental offering of the Gods, led by Brahma, is the decision of the 'Truth' here in verse no. 3 of this canto. The 'fire' was the 'Duloka' or

heavens, which is the 'Tej' of this canto. The Vedas have called this 'Tej' (which was the first step in the evolutionary process of creation and the first subtle and sublime form assumed by the 'absolute Truth' that pre-existed creation) as 'Hiranyagarbh'. With the division of the 'Taj' (or the 'fire element'), came into being the 'water element' which was followed by the 'earth' and the 'food' units of creation.]

Canto 6/Section 3

[Shwetketu's father further expounded on the process of creation and evolution and elaborated on this subject to preach his son—]

1. The 3 famed forms or 'seeds or sperms' of the creatures of this world are the following— (i) Andaj (those born from an egg laid outside the womb, e.g. birds), (ii) Jarauj (those born from an embryo developing inside the womb of a mother, e.g. a man), and (iii) Udbhij' (i.e. those born from seeds, e.g. plants) (1).

2. That divine and sublime Truthful entity present before the time there was even a hint of creation coming into being, made a firm decision having profound implications that it would transform itself (or metamorphose) into a 'Jivatma' (literally, an entity called 'Atma' which showed all the 'signs of life and activity') and enter the 3 basic and fundamental forms as the 'seed or sperm' of the creatures (see verse no. 1 above) which would act as the primary launching pad for the multifaceted infinite variety of products or creatures that would eventually emerge, develop, evolve, multiply, propagate and then populate this vast void of space which had nothing in the beginning of creation (2).

[Note :- (i) All this 'initial phase' was at an atomic level. The 1st spark to split the symbolic cosmic atom was this 'decision' by the ultimate 'truthful entity' (Brahm) —that to remain neutral and inactive and inert was tantamount to death and to the wastage of the stupendous, magnificent and most powerful powers that are trapped in its bosom, the cosmic atom, which can be otherwise unleashed and used by making itself 'active'. (ii) We will note that all the 3 fundamental forms that the creatures took—*Andaj*, *Jarayuj* and *Udbhij* as described in verse no. 1 above—are all 'rounded, spherical or elliptical egg-shaped'. This is the basic form which forces of nature allow for stability, as the atom is also round and so is the cosmos, because the forces of gravity can ensure stability by pulling everything to its centre such that a spherical or semi-spherical shape is the ideal shape for stability. This is evident from the shape of an atom, of the earth, the heavenly bodies of the solar system, the sun, the moon, the planets, the stars etc. —all of them are spherical or semi- spherical, rounded or egg shaped in form. This is the ideal shape which helps maintain equilibrium of natural forces. When this equilibrium was disturbed, the whole set of ever-expanding and contracting process was set in motion —till the time of the 'great-crunch', according to modern science, when everything will start falling back into itself to ultimately become the original, neutral 'pure truth' in the original void where there was nothing in the beginning. Though not especially mentioned in the present text, this is the ultimate end which is called 'Brahm' by Vedanta.]

3. It (the ultimate truth or Brahm) decided thus—'Having subtly entered these 3 primary divine forces, which would act like the launching pad for creation, I shall divide each one

of them further into 3 segments or parts'. With this determination and decision, the supreme and divine entity entered or injected itself into these 3 primary forms of life as a 'Jivatama' (i.e. the Atma or soul of the would-be creation) and entitled each of these primary forms to have a distinct name, form and shape (as described in verse no. 1 of this section— viz. Andaj, Jarauj and Udbhij) (3).

[Note :- The 3 parts or segments into which a particular class of creation as delineated in verse no. 1 of this section was divided are the following—(i) The Atma or soul, (ii) the name of the class or category, called a common noun, into which the creation was divided, e.g. a man, a dog, a bird, a tree etc., and (iii) The approximate contours and shape that it would take —i.e. the external, visual characteristic features which delineated one particular class or category of creation so that it could be distinguished from the other and help in separation, segregation and identification of all the members of a particular class or segment, as well as the individual members within that class or segment. The 3 basic, fundamental classes or categories or segments into which the whole creation was divided are given in verse no. 1 above (birds and animals or non humans, humans and plants).

For example, man is one segment or section or class into which creation was divided by Brahma. Amongst men, there are people of different complexion, nationalities, gene pools, physical characteristics as well as mental temperaments etc. Similarly, amongst animals and plants, there are thousands and thousands of different varieties of life forming an entire body of science called zoology and botany respectively.]

4. That divine Lord divided each of these classes or categories or segments of creation further into 3 distinct divisions. Oh gentleman! The way in which each of these 3 divine original forces or forms which constitute this whole creation have been divided into 3 divisions is well known to me (4).

[Note :- The 3 divisions of each class or category of creatures of all sorts are the following— (i) The gross body, (ii) the subtle body, and (iii) the causal body. These 3 divisions are fundamental parts of all living creatures.]

Canto 6/Section 4

[The primary energy which infuses life into an organism or creature is symbolic of the 'divine fire' which not only initiated but also sustains and perpetuates the creation. When it is said that the primary forces of life were segregated or divided into 3 distinct classes or categories as described in section 3, verse no. 1 of this canto, it is just for the sake of convenience of understanding and learning, not to justify the illusion of an actual independence of existence or independence of identity of these forces which such segregation or delineation creates or suggests. All entities of creation are essentially and inherently one and the same, because their primary source is the same absolute truthful reality called Brahm. This basic, incontrovertible and fundamental fact has already been explained by the example of clay, gold and iron in section 1 of this canto. Now that idea is further developed and extended to the 'fire' element here —]

1. The 'red or orange' colour of the 'divine Fire' or energy, which has been hypothetically segregated into three divisions or parts for the practical convenience of comprehension, represents the fiery splendour of 'Tej'. The 'white or gray' shade of the fire represents the 'water element' of creation. The 'dark, smoky or dying' colour of fire symbolises the 'food aspect' of creation. [See section 2, verse nos. 3-4 in this context.]

As a result, the 'elementary and primary fire element', which is the essential and truthful identity of all forms of Fire, was veiled by illusionary forms having different colours, shades and names, each appearing to have a separate, distinct and independent existence, or having a distinct identity. These are merely delusory hallucinations or grave misconceptions about the Fire. The various names or adjectives or epithets given to this 'fire', e.g. a red fire, a white fire, a dying fire, a fire with a smoke, a fire giving out sparkles, a fire with ash, or a fire with red hot charcoal or embers etc. are just faulty nomenclatures assigned to it by a mislead and delusioned faculty of speech. None of these names define the fire in its true glorious and fundamental form. They do not tell us about the actual thing called 'fire' —that is, about the 'fire element' in its entirety. All the various names and epithets given to this fire are misnomers, they are away from the truth, and they do not define the 'real fire' as such.

Hence, all these three divisions of creation—the gross, the subtle and the causal forms—are merely three manifestations of the same immutable and un-fractioned Truth. [And this truth is Brahm who had decided in the first place to reveal himself into three separate forms having three distinct existences and identities, but all of them linked to each other by a common inheritance or thread of this 'supreme truth prevailing uniformly and universally in them all'.] (1).

2. [The example of the 'fire' and the explanation cited above in verse no. 1 of this section are also applicable to the following verses no. 2-4 below.]

The 'red or orange' tinged colour of the Sun (Aditya) is a revelation of the Tej (i.e. splendour and radiance, stupendous vitality and glory, magnificence and energy) of Aditya or the Sun-God. The 'whiteness' of the Sun's shine is indicative of the water element, and the 'dark' shade in it represents the food aspect (or the earth element) of creation. Therefore, the basic and fundamental identity of the Sun has been veiled by these three different colours of its light and shades of its brightness depicting the various phases of the Sun. The 'truth' about the Sun has been mired by these illusionary misconceptions about the Sun, though each name given to the various hues of the colour of the light of the Sun are apparently true to the beholder of those shades and hues, but they do not represent the true identity of the Sun in its entirety. All these different names of the Sun (i.e. the Sun with a red hue, a white hue, a yellow hue or one having a dark shade, or casting a dark shadow) are all a fallacious creation of the faculty of speech. All the three forms represented herein above are but a form of the one and the same single truth known by the name of the Sun or Aditya (2).

[Note :- To illustrate the point in question above, we can say that the red or orange colour seen at the time of the rising sun, the white colour of its rays seen during the day time and the darkness of the sky after the sun has visibly gone down in the western horizon —all belong to the 'same' entity called the 'Sun or Aditya', not to different suns. But we say, in are misbelieve, that there is a 'rising sun, a mid day sun, or a setting sun or a sun which has gone down the horizon'; these names which

are given to the Sun are simply misnomers; they are misleading for they are not the truthful and actual description of the 'Sun in its entirety'. At the most, they describe or define only one aspect of the sun; they do not present a holistic view of the Sun or Aditya. These are but a fractionalised or fractured view of the whole, for the 'real Sun' is all of them at once.]

3. The 'red or orange' tinge that is present in the Moon represents its 'Tej', the 'white silvery' colour represents the water element, while the 'darkness' present in it symbolises the food (and earth) aspect of creation. By assigning different names to the moon, its primary and fundamental identity has been tampered with and fudged over by illusionary connotations, for all of these different names given to the moon according to its appearance as beheld by the beholder overlook its basic and underlying truthful and real identity. The three types or shades of the Moon, such as red, white and dark, or the 3 symbols, such as the Tej, water and food, are but a misconception created by the faculty of speech about the wholesome entity called the Moon. Essentially these are but definitions or descriptions of one aspect amongst the many aspects of the moon (3).

[Note :- (i) Verse no. 3 and verse no. 2 are very similar to each other; the only difference is that the examples cited are those of the Moon and the Sun respectively.

(ii) The red or orange tinge of the Moon is rare, but perhaps Uddalak refers to the view of the moon during a severe dust storm when the silvery disk of the moon appears to be tainted by a light veil of red or orange.]

4. The 'red or orange' tinge in a flash or stab of Electric represents its most powerful, most potent and most glorious aspect called Tej. The 'white dazzling light' emanating and streaking out of it symbolises the water element. The 'darkness' remaining in its wake (i.e. after the bolt of lightening has streaked across and illuminated the sky and then vanished from sight) represents the food (and earth) element (this is because 'earth' as such has no light of its own. It does not even reflect the sun's light like the moon, for when seen from outer space, the earth does not shine like we see the moon shining from the earth. That is why the 'dark aspect' is always used to describe the 'earth element' in this Upanishad). These different views of the Electric and the names assigned to the three manifestations of it (e.g. Tej, water and food) removes the basic and fundamental spirit in all these variations of Electric away from the 'real truth' —which is 'Electric'. All the names assigned to it are simply illusionary, fallacious conceptions conjured up by the faculty of speech which shifts the basic and fundamental elements away from the truth in its enthusiastic bid to define 'Electric' as a whole. In short, all these definitions and descriptions of 'electric' are only a fractionalised and fractured view of the wholesome entity called 'electric', and they do not depict its truthful, incontrovertible, real and wholesome form and nature as 'electric' (4).

[Note :- Verse nos. 1-4 have one common strand running through them— (i) *Tej* (glory, splendour, radiance, power, energy, strength, grandeur, vitality and magnificence), (ii) *Water* (the ingredient which is the most prime and essential necessity for life) and (iii) *Food* (which sustains like, provides nourishment to it and needs earth to grow upon). These 3 basic elements are necessary to foster and sustain life. The 'Tej' is the Atma or soul or the driving force, the energy of the creature which needs water and food to sustain itself and the earth to give it a base to survive and propagate. These 3 fundamental

entities are likened to the Fire, Sun, Moon and Electric, and their 3 different aspects. Surely enough, this very fact establishes that though the Fire, the Sun, the Moon and the Electric appear to be different entities outwardly, having a distinct and independent existence from each other, they are all the revealed forms of one single entity called the Atma. This is because without the presence of any one of these basic elements, the whole cycle of creation would be disrupted. Since ‘a father of a son cannot be two person, i.e. he cannot have the genes of another male who is not his biological father’, the natural and logical corollary is that all these elements have their origin in ‘one father’, and that father is Brahm who is none other than the Atma. The different names assigned to these 4 forms of Brahm —the Sun, Moon, Fire and Electric —are misnomers creating illusions of separation of one from the other, or independence of existence and individuality of the different units of creation. These are conjured up by the faculty of speech in its attempt to describe the various aspects of the same Brahm. The ‘Truth’ is far removed from this illusionary spectrum created by assigning different names to the various aspects of the same entity. This fact has been pronounced by the Upanishadic sage in the following 3 verses nos. 5-7 below.]

5. That is why it is said that ancient householders as well as renunciates were very wise, scholarly, erudite, adroit and enlightened about the three fundamental classifications of creation. Nothing remained unknown to or in-comprehended by them (because they had deep insight into and understanding of the truthful reality). These examples of the fire etc. were cited by them to illustrate the basic principles and to show that they were well aware of the fundamentals (5).

6. For them, everything with a red or orange tinge was akin to the fundamental principle called Tej. Likewise, whatever was white was the ‘water element’ for them. And similarly, whatever had a dark hue or shade was the ‘food and earth element’ for them. They knew the truthful essence and fundamental reality behind the visible and apparent but in reality the non-truthful external facade of this creation (6).

7. Besides what is mentioned above, all that remains unmentioned is also deemed to be included or incorporated in what has been said. Nothing is beyond the purview of this ‘Truth’ —this principle was known to them (the ancient sages). Oh gentleman (i.e. Shwetketu)! Learn from me how that supreme Lord (Brahm) revealed himself into the ‘Three Gods’ as described above¹ who subsequently manifested themselves as a man’s body with various organs. This ‘man’ had three fundamental divisions of his body which compositely made up his individual identity² (7).

[Note :- ¹The 3 revelations of Brahm described as ‘God’ (Devta—) are Fire, Water and Earth. The fourth Electric is a synonym of Tej, because both refer to the energy, vitality, power, stamina and strength present in the world. In fact, Tej and Electric are incorporated in the word ‘fire’, as is evident when a fire is caused by electricity short circuit. These 3 fundamental elements of creation are referred to as Gods because not only are they worthy of honour and worship but are also powerful and vital for creation. They protect and sustain and nourish the entire creation much like the benevolent Gods who are actually manifestations of the basic elements of creation which are the inherent forces of Nature.

²In Vedanta, these 3 divisions of the body of a man are called ‘sheaths’ which veil the Brahm’s representative present inside his body. This is called ‘Atma or soul or spirit’ of

the man, and it resides inside his bosom enclosed or enveloped by the 3 sheathes. The following section elaborates on this point.]

Canto 6/Section 5

[This section appears to be a page direct out of a medical book, as it were. It describes how the food eaten by a man, the water drunk by him and the energy derived from both are used and divided into 3 parts by the body.]

1. The 'food' that is eaten by a man is divided into three parts. The grossest part (e.g. fiber) of that food is converted into faecal matters or stool. The medium part (i.e. the subtle part or the juice or the essential categories of nutrients such as the carbohydrates, proteins, fats etc.) is converted into flesh and muscles. The subtlest, basic and microscopic part (i.e. the essential minerals and elements contained in the food, e.g. potassium, calcium, iron, phosphorus etc.; the intangible aspects of food, e.g. how it was obtained—whether it was stolen or earned by one's labour, whether it was cooked in a pleasant environment, whether it was obtained by violent means or peaceful means, whether it is sanctified or not, and such other similar considerations) is converted into 'Mana' (the heart and mind complex) of the creature. (1)

[Note :- The word *Mana* means both the heart as well as the mind because the intangible aspects of the food as hinted above directly effect the mind and the heart. Scientifically speaking, it has a psychological effect on the consumer of that food. A food obtained by unscrupulous, violent and unrighteous means may not influence the gross matter formed from the food, e.g. the faecal part, or even the medium product of the food, e.g. flesh, muscles or bones, as is very evident from corrupt and unscrupulous people who grow fatter by the day by eating rich, nourishing food obtained by ill-gotten money, but their mind and heart never ever find peace, contentedness and bliss; their heart is never at rest. Contrast this with a lean and thin, apparently starved sage or hermit staying in a forest, or even a farmer who toils in his field—they eat dry and coarse fugal meals, they have a thin body but their heart and mind are fully contented and blissful; their heart is large and accommodating, their mind never feels jealously and hatred for others. They have no diseases which afflict the corrupt people who have a fat, well-fed body.]

2. The 'water' that is drunk is also similarly divided into three parts. Its grossest part is converted into urine. Its medium part (the subtle part, the liquid nourishment dissolved in it as vital nutrients, the 'liquid or fluid' aspect of water) forms the blood. And its most vital and elementary part forms the Pran or the vitality known as the 'life' of the creature. [That is why we say 'a man is dying of thirst' because without water his Pran is unable to survive.] (2)

[Note :- Blood is fluid like water, though thicker. If the blood supply is cut off, the man dies instantly. The brain (or the mind) and the heart cannot function or survive without blood which is an incarnation of water. Hence, it is water—and not food—which is symbolic of the presence of 'life' or soul in the creature.]

3. The 'Tej' (the fire element) that is imbibed along with food and water (we must remember that both were pre-existed by fire) is also transformed into three forms. The grossest form of fire converts itself into bones; its medium part is converted into marrow, while its subtlest part (i.e. its vitality, its potentials, its powers and prowess, its energy, radiance, splendour and magnificence) is converted into speech. [That is why we say, 'a fiery speech', 'a heated argument', or 'an energetic oration'.] (3)

[Note : Just as soft clay or earth is turned into a hard block called brick by fire, or as every geologist knows, ancient forests were turned into solid walls of rock and coal in the bowels of the earth due to intense heat and pressure, which are the aspects of 'Tej', the nutrition derived from both the water as well as the food are likewise converted by the fire element or the 'Tej' into the 'bones'. Further, as everyone knows, petroleum, gases, water etc. are found in earth surrounded by the hardest of rocks, the 'marrow' is found inside the outer hardened, rocky crust of the 'Tej' in the form of the bone. And even as the heat of the earth's bowl spews out of the volcano accompanied by a violent burst of red-hot lava, the opening of a man's mouth can similarly pour out his words which are pushed out by the surging energy within him, much like the lava being pushed out of the mouth of the earth in the form of the creator of the volcano. That is why we say 'his words spewed fire and brimstone'.

These allegories are too profound to be neglected. These analogues and metaphors are the products of highly elevated intellect of the Upanishadic sages and seers. Nevertheless, they require equally higher intellect on the part of the disciple to grasp their profundity and import.]

4. Oh gentleman (i.e. Shwetketu)! The field of activity of the food is 'Mun' (heart and mind), of the water element is the Pran (the life sustaining force inside a creature), and that of Tej (the fire element) is the 'faculty of speech'.

Shwetketu asked his father for clarification—'Please elaborate further on what you have said'. Then his father (Uddalak) continued with his discourse — (4).

Canto 6/Section 6

1. [The example of churning of curd to produce butter is cited here]

Uddalak said to his son Shwetketu—'Oh gentleman! When curd is vigorously churned, the subtlest, lightest, finest, most excellent and the best element or constituent present in it comes out and floats at the top of the viscous liquid called 'curd', instead of sinking down to its bottom. The product which comes up and floats on the surface is called 'ghee' or raw butter (1).

2. Oh gentleman! Similarly, when the 'food' is eaten and digested inside the body, the subtlest, the finest and the inherently good and uplifting qualities and virtues present in the food, qualities which are intangible and inexplicit but nevertheless intrinsic to that food and is an integral part of it, are extracted from the food, collected and moved upwards. They are transformed into the mind and heart of the creature (i.e. into his sharpness of thoughts, his noble outlooks, his wise perception of things and views, his higher intelligence, emotions and sentiments that together help mould the very personality of the creature and determine its actions and deeds. (2)

3. Oh gentleman! The subtlest and inherent good and auspicious qualities and virtues of the ‘water’ drunk by a creature are collected and precipitated upwards to transform themselves into the vital life of the creature. This vitality is known as ‘Pran’. (3)

[Note :- It is easy to understand how water goes up and gets precipitated. Water, in a subtle form, exists as moisture and vapour, which always rises up and condenses when it finds a cool surface. Since ‘water’ is a pre-requisite for life, it is said that it transforms itself into Pran. On the other hand, the grossness of water forms urine and it moves downwards, collects in the bladder and is finally excreted.]

4. Oh gentleman! In a similar way, the subtlest, best, finest and excellent qualities that are inherent to the ‘fire’ element imbibed by a creature (along with the food and water taken in by him) move upwards and manifest themselves into its speech. (4)

5. Oh gentleman! The mind and heart have their subtle existence in the food, the ‘Pran’ in the water, and the speech in the ‘Tej’ (fire)¹.

Shwetketu asked his father for further clarification, at which his father elaborated as follows — (5).

[Note :- ¹Without food, the mind and heart cannot work properly because of lack of nourishment and energy. Without water, there will be no blood, and even the food eaten can neither be digested nor its beneficial nutrients circulated in the body and absorbed by the tissues for the benefit of the body. Consequentially there will be no life. Similarly, without vitality, warmth and energy of fire present inside a man, he will have no energy to speak, because the energy present in the food is usable only when the food is digested by heat and fire present in the intestine which helps to digest the food. The warmth of blood keeps it flowing, thereby taking the extracted nutrients from the food eaten to various parts of the body, its organs and tissues. The body feels nourished and energised. The brain functions properly and a man is able to speak cogently and intelligently. In fact, without fire, even water which harbours life will freeze and wouldn't help to sustain life of the creature.]

Canto 6/Section 7

1. Uddalak said to his son Shwetketu—‘Oh gentleman! A man is endowed with 16 types or aspects of noble virtues and strength which endows him with potentials, strengths, powers and majesty. These virtues are an integral part of him. They are called the different ‘Kalaas’ of a man¹ and are like special traits present in him that define his individual nature and behaviour. Therefore, in order to convince yourself about the veracity of this fact, you should fast for 15 days and drink only water.

Since Pran or life is dependent on water, it will not be harmed as long as it gets adequate supply of water for its sustenance (1).

[Note :- (i) ¹The 16 so-called Kalaas of a man are his different attributes, strengths, qualities and virtues. Since a man is an exact replica of the ‘Viraat Purush’, who in turn is a subtle manifestation of the sublime Brahm, these 16 qualities or attributes of a man

refer to the 16 qualities of Brahm himself. These qualities or attributes are the following — (i) Shraddha (faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect, devotion), (ii) Pran (life; the very essence of creation), (iii) Akash (the all-pervading, all-encompassing sky or space element), (iv) Vayu (wind, air element), (v) Tej (energy, dynamism, splendour, radiance, glory, might, majesty and fire element), (vi) Apaha (water element which is the all-important ingredient for life), (vii) 'Prithivi' (earth element which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation), (viii) Indriya (the organs of the body, both the organs of perception as well as of action), (ix) Mana (mind and heart and their stupendous potentials), (x) Anna (food, the element without which life is simply not imaginable because it provides it with the basic nourishment and energy), (xi) Virya (semen, sperms, standing for courage, valour, potency, vitality and prowess), (xii) Tapa (austerity and penance, forbearance and tolerance of hardships, carrying out strict religious vows) (xiii) Mantra (the ability to give good advise, the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, logically arrive at a conclusion), (xiv) Karma (taking actions and doing deeds), (xv) Loka (worldly interactions and behaviours), and (xvi) Naam (name, fame, renown, honour and glory).

(ii) In simple terms it means that a person's total composite personality, his characteristic attributes and individuality, his vitality and stamina, his prowess, powers and strength, his drive and vigour et al can be divided into 16 parts. If 15 parts die out and even one remains alive, this single part can be used to revive the other 15 parts as explained below in this section.]

2. Thereafter, on the instructions and advice of his father, Shwetketu did not eat for the next 15 days. Then he went near his father and said, 'Oh Lord! What shall I do now?' His father replied, 'Oh gentleman! Pronounce the Mantras (i.e. chant the hymns) of the Rig, Yajur and Sam Vedas from your memory'. Shwetketu replied, 'I cannot remember and recollect them in my mind' (2).

3. Then his father explained to him, 'Oh gentleman! When the bulk of the fuel has been almost consumed by the fire and only a single lump of glowing ember resembling a glow worm remains behind, the latter cannot produce sufficient heat. Similarly, out of your 16 subtle and inherent virtues, potentials, characteristics and strengths, called 'Kalaas' (see note of verse no. 1 above), 15 have been consumed by not eating for 15 days, and only one is left behind (because you have not fasted on the 16th day). Hence, you cannot study and remember the hymns of the Vedas (because your mind has been deprived of its essential fuel that provides it with the necessary stamina, agility, alertness and energy to concentrate upon your studies, to remember and recollect what you have studied when demanded to do so due to lack of concentration and energy because your mind and its recollection capabilities have been starved of nourishment and energy that it normally gets from food. This is because you have been fasting for the last 15 days). Therefore, go and eat now. Then you will understand what I mean (3).

[Note :- The food nourishes the brain. Deprivation of food deprives the brain of its much needed nourishment and energy, and without nourishment its vital functions slow down and finally lapse into complete inactivity and stupor. It becomes semiconscious, listless, drowsy, incoherent, uncoordinated, inept, sluggish and generally incompetent to show any intellectual activity and understanding. It is not dead par se, but neither is it sufficiently active and alert to be of any benefit or good. The father wished to prove to Shwetketu that the mind, called the 'Mana', is the entity which relies on the subtle energy

and vitality factors present in food in order to survive and be of any use. It does not depend on water or fire as much as it depends on food, for Shwetketu was able to breathe, walk, carry on all the functions of the body and speak normally, though he could not recollect what he has learnt because his memory had failed as his mind was not functioning in its prime state due to food deprivation.]

4. Thereafter, Shwetketu ate food on the advice of his father. Having satisfied himself, he went near his father. Whatever his father asked him then, he could remember the answer and replied accordingly.

[That is, after Shwetketu ate his full, he regained his energy and his recollection powers. So when he went back to his father, he could answer all the questions his father asked and he could recollect and recite the hymns of the Vedas which he could not do earlier when he was hungry after fasting for 15 days] (4).

5. Then he (Uddalak, son of Aruni, father of Shwetketu) said, 'Oh gentleman! When the greater part of the fire has died down or is still smouldering before getting completely extinguished, and even a single red hot piece of glowing ember resembling a glow worm is left behind, if at that time a twig or shoot is placed on this leftover single hot piece of glowing ember and patiently, gradually stoked and puffed with air, it will not only set fire to that twig but also revive the fire back to its original glorious form (5).

6. Similarly, my dear gentleman, out of your 16 subtle 'Kalaas' (as described in verse no. 1) only one remained active. It was re-kindled when you ate food again. That is why you could recollect the hymns of the Vedas after eating food. Oh dear gentleman! This proves that the mind is a form which relies on food, 'Pran' relies upon water and speech relies on 'Tej' (fire). As a result of this exercise, Shwetketu was able to fully comprehend the preaching of his father (6).

Canto 6/Section 8

1. The son of Aruni, who was famous by the name of Uddalak, said to his son Shwetketu, 'Oh gentleman! Be attentive and carefully understand the state of existence called 'sleep' which I shall now expound to you in detail. When a man sleeps, it is said that he has nearly attained his 'pure self', which by the way is the true nature of the Atma, or is akin to the 'absolute Truth'. That is why it is called 'Swapit' because a sleeping man becomes established in his own pure self which is uncorrupted by external influences of this world simply because the sleeping man is unaware of his surroundings (1).

[Note :- The Atma or the soul which is the pure self of the creature has 3 states of existence—the waking, the dream and the deep sleep state of consciousness. There is a 4th state also, and it is called 'Turiya', which is obtained as a result of going beyond the 3rd stage of deep sleep, and it is a permanent state of bliss and felicity.

The brain has 2 components —the intellect and the mind. The former is under the direct control of the Atma while the mind is subordinate to the intellect. The mind receives worldly stimuli through the sense organs, passes them to the intellect, obtains

instructions from the intellect and passes them on to the organs of action —this state prevails when the man is ‘awake’.

Now, when he is asleep, there are two stages—either he dreams or he does not. During the ‘dreams state’, the inherent Vasanas (the hidden passions, yearning and desires) come into play at the sub-conscious level and the mind lives up to all those Vasanas in an imaginary world. But when there is no dream, i.e. during the ‘deep sleep state’ of consciousness, the Atma is freed from interference and it reverts back to its original form of being ‘nothingness, having no feelings and no emotions’, just like the case wherein the mirror is removed from the front of a man and his image vanishes from it and the image reverts back into its primary source or object, which in this case is the man himself whose image was formed in the mirror. The Atma is an image of the supreme Brahm. When the mirror of the mind-intellect is removed, it (Atma) reverts back into its primary form which is Brahm whereas it related itself with the world when the mind-intellect were in active mode. So, the aspect of ‘sleep’ discussed in this section is the ‘deep sleep state of consciousness’, because it is in this state that the creature comes in direct contact of his true identity or true self, which is called Atma or pure consciousness. The creature is ‘delinked or uncoupled’ from the external world while sound asleep.

For the external world, a sleeping man is as good as being dead. For example, if a sleeping man is attacked by someone, he won’t resist; he won’t even know what has happened just in front of him while he was asleep. He is not medically or conventionally regarded as dead, but for all practical purposes ‘he is as good as dead’. He neither feels pain nor happiness when in a deep sleep state of existence, which is beyond the dream state of sleep. It is the ‘deep sleep state’ which is called ‘Swaprant’ in this verse — literally meaning to be in one’s own territory, to dwell in one’s natural habitat. It is like being in a state of suspended animation, or a self-imposed state of coma, or a state of being virtually dead, or coming to a stage voluntarily which is almost like being dead but is not actual death.]

2. Even as a falcon tied to a string flies in all the directions but finally comes to rest at the place where it is tied to, the mind too has a tendency to roam about like a vagabond or nomad, and finding no rest or solace anywhere, it comes back to find shelter in the Pran.

[Here, Pran refers to the Atma. Though the two words strictly speaking in literal terms have different connotations —the former is breath or the vital wind passing through the nostril, while the Atma means the soul or spirit residing inside the heart, but for all practical purposes, they are synonymous with each other and one in their implications and usages.]

Hence, oh gentleman, this Mana (mind) is tied to the Pran and not independent of it, i.e. the mind is dependant and subservient to the Pran; it has its master or Lord in the Pran, and has its importance only as long as the Pran allows it to be of any significance (2).

3. Oh gentleman (i.e. Shwetketu)! Now understand the secret of ‘hunger and thirst’. When a man desires to have ‘food’, it is the ‘water’ that becomes its vehicle or medium. Solid food is softened by water, it is water that helps to digest, distribute and help in assimilation of the nutrients present in food for the benefit of the body. Just like a cowherd is called ‘Gonayo’, a horse rider is called ‘Ashwanaye’, and a commander who herds men is called ‘Purushnaye’, the water which carries food to its destination is called ‘Ashanaye’. [The word ‘Asan’ refers to food.]

My dear gentleman! You must realise that this bud represented by the body of the creature (the creation itself) has sprouted from the water element, for without water no seed can germinate (3).

[Note :- True enough, because both the semen of the male in which the sperm floats and the constituents of the female egg which this sperm fertilises in order to produce the zygote which develops into an embryo and ultimately the creature (man or animal), are mucous-like viscous fluids, not dry solids as in the case of any seed of any plant, or dry fruits or other fruits which have a juicy pulp but dry seeds. These dry seeds of the plant kingdom also need wet soil to germinate, for had water not been necessary for life, the arid and parched deserts would have been covered by verdant green forests.]

4. What are the other basics of this body besides food? Oh gentleman! Just like the body has its root in the food, the food has its root in the water, the water has its root in the Tej (fire), and the basic and essential vitality and energy of creation represented by the Tej (or fire) has its root in the ultimate and sublime Truth which is the absolute Reality.

Oh gentleman! We deduce by the extension of this logic, or following this sequence, that all the animate as well as inanimate creatures of this creation have their ultimate root or basis in that entity which is called the ultimate, sublime, immutable, irrefutable and transcendental 'Truth' which is the absolute Reality. In other words, it is that 'Truth' that prevails over the whole spectrum of creation (4).

[Note :- The body of a creature is formed by the activity or action of the male sperm and the female ova. That is, by the active fusion of these two, the process of creation is initiated. The food eaten by a male or a female transforms into a sperm and an ova respectively. To enable their formation, water is required. The water also helps to make their union possible, as well as the development and progress of a new embryo representing the individual creature of this world. But the 'spark or energy' required for all the processes to get started, progress, develop, evolve and fructify into an individual, is Tej. But who has started the fire; no fire starts on its own unless it is kindled by someone else and is handled by him. This 'kindler and handler' of the cosmic fire of creation or the divine spark which started the process of creation, is no one else but Brahm who is also the ultimate, immutable, sublime, irrefutable and transcendental Truth in this creation. He is 'ultimate' because there is nothing further than that point. This Brahm has some unique qualities—one being that there is no foundation or basis on which Brahm rests, and this makes Brahm a unique entity, a unique proposition. The rest of the creation needs a support or foundation, but the miracle is that Brahm does not need any support. It is like a self-supporting, self-sustaining ecosystem. All the other aspects of creation rest or depend one upon the other; it's a symbiotic relationship. But Brahm depends on none. Start eliminating the pillars of creation one by one and the last pillar which can support the whole edifice of creation is Brahm. Remove this last pillar of creation representing Brahm, and the edifice comes tumbling down. That is why it is called 'the ultimate truth and resting place for creation'.]

5. When a thirsty man drinks water, it is taken in (i.e. accepted and absorbed in the body) by the virtue of the Tej (i.e. the vital heat and energy) of the body. Therefore, just like we have the words 'Gopanaye, Ashwanaye, Purushanaye' (see verse no. 3 above), we also call this Tej as the 'carrier or bearer of water'.

Oh gentleman! So, consider this body as having its origin in 'water' because there cannot be any reaction without a corresponding action (5).

[Note :- During the process of metabolism, the vital force or energy or 'Tej' present in the body help in assimilation of both the water as well as the food inside the body. So, the root causative factor which helps in deriving nourishment from either food or water is the vital Tej present in the body. The Tej enables the body to utilise the water and food for its own benefit. Here the 'reaction' is the development and sustenance of the body, and the 'action' is the extraction of nutrition from food and water for this purpose by the Tej present in the body. So since the body keeps itself alive, it naturally follows that some action is going on imperceptibly inside the body which makes this possible.]

6. Oh gentleman! Where or what is the root, foundation or base of the body produced from this water (as described in verse no. 5 above)? The origin or the root of water is in the Tej element, and the latter's root lies in the ultimate and universal 'Truth' or 'Sat'.

Oh gentleman! All the creatures have their origin in the entity called the 'ultimate and universal Truth'; it is their foundation, basis and essential shelter and refuge. Even the grossest form that appears to be the sustenance of all the creatures, that is food and water etc., are also based or founded on that 'ultimate and universal Truth' which is most subtle.

Oh gentleman! The patron Gods of all these 3 vital strands (i.e. Tej, water and fire) that sustain the fiber of life, enter the body of a man (or any other creature) subtly and imperceptibly, and once having done so, they divide themselves into 3 aspects or parts. I have already clarified this to you earlier. That is why the voice of a person approaching death collapses and dissolves in his mind, the mind collapses and dissolves in the 'Pran' (the breaths), the 'Pran' collapses and merges with the vital 'Tej', and the 'Tej' finally coalesces and dissolves in the 'supreme, transcendental entity' which is stupendous and majestic in its essence, form and nature, and it is known by the name of the 'supreme Lord Brahm'. (6)

[Note :- The last part of this verse outlines the steps taken by a dying man which are absolutely verifiable in our practical life. When a man slowly dies, first he stops speaking, but his brain continues to think and work. Then the brain relapses into a stupor-like subconscious state called 'coma' wherein he is physically, bodily alive as he can breathe and his body is warm, but is mentally dead and does not respond to any external stimuli. A person in coma cannot think for himself, cannot hear or speak or see and cannot use any of his organs under the direct order from his brain. Then gradually he stops even breathing, but the body is still warm. It takes sometime before the body becomes cold and rigor mortis (the rigidity of muscle, stiffness) of death sets in. This verse is one of the numerous Upanishadic verses which prove the scientific value and approach of the teachings of Vedanta. They also show that the ancient sages and seers were well-versed in the different aspects of life sciences. It is not some philosophical gibberish, some outdated nonsense, but is based on sound scientific principles which are verifiable and logical.]

7. This is a Vidya (knowledge, skill, expertise, scholarship and erudition) known as 'Anima'¹—i.e. an in-depth 'micro metaphysical' knowledge just like we have microbiology or atomic and molecular physics or chemistry in our modern age;

knowledge of something which is subtle, sublime and fine, something which is imperceptible by the physical senses but can be grasped at the level of intellect and mind). It is all that there is to be understood; or all that exists. This knowledge pertains to what is called 'the Atma' which is like an atom, and verily Shwetketu, it is you.

[That is, the father emphasises to Shwetketu that his pure and truthful identity is not his body which is nourished by what he eats or drinks, or even the different basic elements called the 5 Bhuts² that constitute his body, but it is the Atma.]'

After that, Shwetketu asked his father once again, 'Oh the revered one! Please explain this more to me once again (by giving me other examples)'.

Then his father said 'alright', and assured him that he will explain the subject afresh (7).

[Note :- (i) ¹The word *Anima* comes from the root word 'Anu', meaning an atom. It means something which is at the very heart of any problem and its solution. It also means the microcosmic and the minutest point in any body of knowledge that must be understood before the concept as a whole becomes clear. In fact, without understanding the basic concept behind any body of knowledge, the knowledge will become superficial. It is dealing with knowledge at its basic, primary and fundamental level. The 'atom' is itself is neutral, but it is most powerful at the same time. It symbolises a complete world in it self. This atomic world is symbolic of Brahm. The 'Anima knowledge' pertains to this microcosmic or atomic knowledge of the Atma-like Brahm which is the central point at the core of the universe. Even as an atom has a number of attributes, the Atma of the cosmos has also various attributes. And even as an atom is neutral, the Atma represented by the Brahm is also neutral. The emphasis by sage Uddalak on the atomic aspect of the knowledge of Brahm, which is the absolute Truth in creation, is similar to that case when a chemist sees hydrogen and oxygen atoms as the basic ingredient of water, carbon as the basic building block of organic food, and the functioning of the body is a chain of chemical reactions called metabolism taking place inside the body. A wise, sagacious, scholarly, erudite and enlightened person also sees the subtle and sublime conscious Atma similarly as the basic ingredient in all the entities that exist in this creation and not the gross forms that they take.

(ii) ²The 5 basic elements that together form this creation are —earth, water, fire/energy, wind/air and space/sky. All these elements are lifeless without the Atma which is the only conscious factor in creation, and in conjunction with these elements, renders life into the creature formed by these elements.]

Canto 6/Section 9

[Uddalak, the father of Shwetketu, continued with his discourse with the instance of the honey bee. This use of honey as a metaphor for something that is the sweetest, the best and most excellent essence created by Nature, and its use as a method for contemplation and meditation upon Brahm and Atma, is called 'Madhu Vidya'. It has been extensively used in the worship of the Sun which is likened to the honeycomb. This form of worship of the Sun is called 'Aditya Vidya' because it is the Sun-God who is actually being worshipped here, and he is known by the name of Aditya.]

1. 'Oh gentleman! The honey bee roams about in all the directions and wanders from tree to tree and hops from flower to flower in search of nectar, and then it stores it as honey (in the honey comb) (1).

2. When the small quantities of nectar collected from so many different sources are converted and stored together at a single place as honey, then this honey cannot determine the individual separate sources from where its primary ingredient, the nectar, had come from and the flowers from where the bees had initially gone to collect the drops of nectar. All distinction between different nectar drops extracted from different flowers has been lost forever once the nectar is converted into honey.

Similarly, when the creature ultimately attains or realises the eclectic, ultimate and sublime Universal Truth which is the absolute, one and only Reality (called Brahm or Atma), it relinquishes all visages of independence and illusions of having an independently identity. Even if the creature wants, it would not be able to distinguish itself from the Ultimate Truth (Brahm). that is, the individual Atma of the creature would become one with Brahm, and the creature wouldn't know at that time that it was born in such and such family, clan, class etc.; it will be simply not possible for it (2).

[Note :- Earlier, in section 8, it has been explained that during the deep sleep state of consciousness, the creature comes in direct contact with the Atma or Brahm, but when he wakes up to the apparent realities of this world, he forgets that just a while ago he has had no direct connection with the external world but was in direct communication with the Atma. While awake or dreaming in sleep, he thinks of the world, one way or the other, either at the conscious level or at the sub-conscious level respectively. This is what is meant here in Vedantic terms. As soon as he wakes up, he starts enjoying and experiencing the feelings and emotions related to the world, he laments at sorrowful experiences and feels happy at joyful experiences, but in the process he forgets that his true identity is the pure self or Atma which neither feels sorry nor joyous under any circumstance.]

3. The various creatures of the world, such as tigers, lions, wolves, boars, insects and worms, those that sting (e.g. scorpions, snakes) as well as those who bite, such as mosquitoes etc. that are born in this world, keep on taking birth and dying continuously in an endless cycle of birth and death (3).

[Note :- During a particular birth, any one of these creatures have certain group of desires, some remaining unfulfilled. Besides it, they do different deeds and take actions which will have some kind of fruit or consequences, whether good or bad. These two form a cocktail that decides their next birth. At the time of death, as explained in a step-wise process in section no. 8, verse no. 6 above, their Atma or Tej dissolves in Brahm, but this cocktail consisting of unfulfilled desires and the consequences of actions taken and deeds done in the previous life, still cling to them. This has to be understood at the subtle micro level, or at the molecular level and not at the apparent physical gross level of the outside world. Taking the example of the molecule of water in a water drop which consist of two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen, they will remain the same in a drop of water whether that drop is in a spoon or in a vast ocean or in the dirty, stinking water of the drain. If a spoon of drain water is added to the salty ocean, the two atoms of hydrogen still cling to the single atom of oxygen. If a spoon of water is now taken from the ocean and analysed, the same configuration of these atoms are found in that water. In

short, the cycle of these two atoms sticking to each other does not break as long as we recognise the drop as water and separate them by electrolysis.

When electrolysis of water takes place using electrodes, the hydrogen and oxygen atoms are separated from one another. At this point, the entity known as ‘water’ ceases to exist. Similarly the two clinging entities to the Atma of a creature—the deeds and their results as well as unfulfilled desires—remain bonded to it even after death when it has found its contact with its primary source, the macrocosmic form of the Atma called Brahm. But the dissolution isn’t permanent, for they keep on endlessly taking birth and dying and getting reborn again just like the water drop which keeps on circulating between the atmosphere and the earth without realising that it has had the first hand opportunity to witness the ultimate truth and find its primary resting place in the ocean. In the case of molecule of water, the resting place is the ocean, while in the case of the Atma of the creature, it is Brahm. In the case of water, the ultimate truth is the atoms of hydrogen and oxygen which are pure, uncorrupted gasses, while in the case of the creature, it is the Atma which is a fraction and image of Brahm which is also pure and uncorrupt.

In short, even as the water molecule of a spoon does not realise that it has found its main source in the ocean, and it evaporates from it in the form of moisture only to come down on the earth once again as rainfall, the creature dies and its Atma merges with the Brahm only to re-emerge from it and come down to take birth once again. The water drop in the ocean cannot know the source from where it has come—i.e. from which river, which sea, which country and which rain. The two cycles are similar to each other and the metaphor of the water molecule has been used here to illustrate the point.

Sankaraacharya, in his commentary, has given the example of a villager who gets up from sleep in the morning and goes out from the house into the village. But he all the while knows that he has come from his house and will go back there at night fall. Why does the Atma not realise this that it has come from Brahm and should go back to him? Even as an ordinary villager realises that the village is not his house, why does the creature not realise that the world is not its dwelling place where it can rest? This is answered in the next section no. 10.]

4. This eclectic, subtle and sublime knowledge is esoteric, mysterious and irrefutable, but very fine and supreme in nature (i.e. it is very fantastic, thoughtful, penetrating and an authoritative view of the Brahm and Atma, but only a few enlightened ones can understand it). Verily Shwetketu, it is the ‘Truth’, it is the ‘Atma’, it is ‘you’.

Hearing this from his father, Shwetketu pleaded with him for further elaboration and examples. His father agreed and assured him that he will do so (4).

Canto 6/Section 10

[The allegory of a flowing river is cited here.]

1. ‘Oh gentleman! The rivers flowing in the eastern and western directions take the path which is convenient to them. They originate from the ocean and ultimately fall back and merge in the ocean. These rivers lose their individuality and independent attributes and identity after pouring themselves into the ocean (1).

[Note :- The water evaporates from the vast reservoir of water on earth called the ocean. The evaporated water forms into clouds in the atmosphere; the clouds fall down on the earth as rain. High altitudes and cold temperature freeze the rainwater into glaciers on mountains; these glaciers melt to produce the source of the rivers. As these streams of water coming out from the glaciers flow down the plains, they collect rainwater from the plains below and become major rivers. The water from melting glaciers feed the rivers which cascade down mountains and gush through valleys and meadows to open into the ocean. In the Indian context, the rivers going eastwards open in the Bay of Bengal, and those heading westwards pour their contents into the Arabian sea.]

2. In a similar fashion, the subjects of the whole creation do not realise that all of them have had their origin in one single source which is the ultimate, indivisible, unequivocal, irrefutable and immutable 'Truth'. Such ignorant creatures continue to take re-birth here (in an endless cycle of transmigration) as tigers, lions, wolves, boars, insects, worms, those creatures that sting (e.g. scorpions, serpents), and those that bite, such as mosquitoes etc. (even as the endless cycle of ocean —cloud —rain —river —ocean continues endlessly forever). (2)

[Note :- The simile between the two is stark. These creatures continue to remain trapped in this cycle like the water in the ocean —river —ocean cycle as noted above. Scientifically speaking, a lion cannot produce a mosquito and vice versa. But a lion will produce a cub and this cycle of a lion —cub —lion will continue endlessly. This profound and universal biological fact has been explained by the Upanishadic sage in his own inimitable philosophical language.]

3. This is the knowledge called 'Anima Vidya' which pertains to the Atma which is as miniscule and as subtle and as microscopic, but at the same time as potential and as stupendous and as powerful as the Atom. Verily Shwetketu, it is you'.

Then Shwetketu requested his father to elaborate once again. The request was accepted by his father who assured him further explanation (3).

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3. (b) The Maho-panishad:--

(Canto 1, verse nos. 1-14; Canto 5, verse nos. 135-163)

Canto 1

1-3. After offering prayers to the Lord, narration of this great Upanishad commences. Before the beginning of this creation, the only one who existed was verily the Supreme Being who was called Narayan. Except him, there was no existence of Brahma (the creator), Rudra (Shiva, the concluder), Water, Fire, Som (moon) and such other Gods. There was no netherworld, no earth, no stars, no moon or sun etc. The 'Viraat Purush' (Narayan, the all encompassing macrocosmic supreme Lord) felt lonely and did not like that environment which was devoid of any activity (1-3).

[Note :- According to Vedanta, this Viraat Purush is the first gross manifestation in which the unmanifested Brahm revealed himself; this Viraat Purush was a term given to Brahm itself when he metamorphosed in the primary Male aspect of creation, and having assumed for himself certain attributes—the chief being the thought that ‘he’ desires or wants not to remain alone and initiate the process of creation. Further, whereas Brahm is addressed by the pronoun ‘it’ because it is a neuter gender, the Viraat Purush is addressed by the male pronoun ‘he’. Obviously, the ball of differentiation, of delineation, of segregation, of classification, of evolution, of ‘this and that’ had been set rolling, and which ball hit other balls creating the ‘random agitation’ of the atoms in the primordial cosmic gel, causing it to get activated and abandon its hibernation. Thus was set into motion the stupendous and unprecedented chain reaction of creation that is still unfolding.]

4-6. The decision or determination or resolve in the supreme Being's bosom (heart) to abandon this inactivity and loneliness, and initiate the process of creation, was called ‘Yogastom’ or the supreme sacrifice done by the supreme Being to initiate the process of creation as desired by him.

To begin with, 14 males and a female emerged from him. These 14 males symbolically represented the following—5 organs of perception (such as the nose, tongue, eye, ear, skin respectively), 5 organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, genitals and excretory), one mind, one ‘Ahankar’ (ego, pride, haughtiness, arrogance and hypocrisy), one ‘Pran’ (the vital wind force that sustains life in the creature; breath) and one ‘Atma’ (the soul, spirit, pure consciousness present in the creature which gives him his truthful identity) —bringing the tally to 14. Similarly the female was called ‘Buddhi’ (intellect and powers to discriminate).

In addition to these (14 males and 1 female), the 5 perceptions (smell, taste, sight, hearing, touch) called ‘Tanmatras’, and the 5 basic elements (called Mahaboos— such as the earth, water, fire, air and space) were also created that together formed the macrocosmic body of the ‘Viraat Purush’ (who is the huge, colossus, all encompassing form of the first primal male aspect of creation; the rest of the creation emerged from him). The primordial Supreme Being (Brahm or Narayan) entered that ‘Viraat Purush’ (as its macrocosmic soul or spirit, thereby injecting into the ‘Viraat’ the most important spark of life-giving injection). This ‘Viraat Purush’ does not produce the various dimensions of time —such as the past, present and the future, the years, the periods, the days and their various aspects etc.. These are the creations of the Supreme Being called Narayan (who is synonymous with Brahm) (4-6).

[Note :- The Viraat Purush was the body that Narayan or Brahm assumed once he desired to do something. Hence, the ‘Viraat Purush’ was the ‘macrocosmic gross body’ of creation, while Narayan was like the ‘life giving Atma or soul’ of that body. But once Narayan entered the ‘Viraat Purush’ as his soul, the latter began to be known as Narayan. Thus the ‘Viraat Purush’ represented the macrocosmic form of the cosmic Atma called Narayan. This Narayan is synonymous with Brahm.

Prior to this very first step, Brahm and Narayan were synonymous, but since then, Narayan came to be known as Viraat Purush or Vishnu. It must be very clear here, without any ambiguity, that Brahm is the Atma or soul of Vishnu or Narayan or Viraat

Purush even as the Atma or soul is the true identity of any living individual creature in this world. So, honestly, we can say that ‘Vishnu is Brahm but Brahm is not Vishnu’.]

7. By and by, the ‘Viraat Purush’, who will now be known as Narayan (because the latter had indistinguishably merged himself with the former as described in verse no. 6 above) had another wish. So he meditated upon it. As a result of his mediation, a ‘male’ was created from his forehead. He had a trident in his hands and had 3 eyes. Fame, majesty, glory, truth, self restraint and continence, austerity and penances, renunciation and dispassion, accomplishment and successes, all the signs of creation including the cosmic word OM representing Brahm, all the 4 Vedas such as the Rig, Yajur, Sam and Atharva, as well as all the ‘Chandas’ (hymns or verses of these Vedas) —all these were fundamentally established in this person; or, in other words this supreme Lord who was created from the forehead of Narayan had all these virtues in him. That is why he became known as ‘Ishan’ (literally, the insignia or emblem of the supreme Lord; practically he symbolised the Lord himself as his manifestation and represented him) and ‘Mahadeo’ (literally meaning the great Lord or great God).

[These epithets are used for Shiva. Hence, the Being who was created from the head of Narayan as described in this verse was Lord Shiva and none other] (7).

8. Subsequently, Narayan thought of something else and mediated once again upon his new thought in order to fulfill it. While meditating, drops of sweat emerged from his forehead. Those sweat drops spread everywhere as ‘Apaha’ like a cloud or vapour of moisture, which was to become the basic ingredient of life in the creation. This was called ‘water’.

[Another interpretation of the word ‘Apaha’ is that it formed the primordial fluid by coalescing of those initial drops with one another to form the cosmic primordial jelly-like substance from which the whole creation eventually moulded itself.]

From this ‘Apaha’ emerged the first egg-shaped ‘Hiranyagarbha’¹ which evolved into (i.e. produced) the 4-headed Brahma (the patriarch God of the creation) (8).

[Note :- ¹The word “Hiranyagarbha” literally means the ‘golden coloured egg lying in the womb’. Presently, the cosmic fluid called Apaha was injected with the spark of life by the great Lord called Mahadev who was created before this fluid came into existence (as in verse no. 7 and 8 above). This cosmic egg with a golden yolk was nourished in the womb of Narayan, the ‘Viraat Purush’. The word ‘Garbha’ means ‘a womb’. From this ‘Hiranyagarbh’ (the golden-yolk egg being nourished in the womb of the ‘Viraat Purush’) emerged the 4-headed Brahma, the creator, who eventually took care of the nitty-gritty work of the actual creation of the cosmos. This is the reason why the ‘God with three eyes’, i.e. Lord Shiva, is called Mahadeo, the great God (as referred to in verse no. 7), and Vishnu, as Narayan, is called the ‘Paalak’, i.e. the one who sustains, nourishes, protects and takes care of the subjects of the creation created by Brahma. He is also the ‘Viraat Purush’ or the macrocosmic gross body of the creation into which the Supreme Brahm, in the form of Narayan, had entered and merged with (as described above in verse no. 6). The emergence of Brahma from the navel of Narayan or Vishnu or ‘Viraat Purush’ at the end of the stem of the divine lotus emerging from his navel is symbolic of the emergence of a child from the womb of its mother at the end of the tether called placenta linking the child with the mother. This is one of the great secrets and mysteries of creation.

The word 'Hiranyagarbha' is also akin to a 'musk deer' in as much as the fact that the musk, which is hidden in the abdomen of the deer, spreads its pleasant fragrance all around, but no one can see it because of it being canceled inside the abdomen of the deer. Similarly, the glory of Brahm is spread throughout the universe but it is not possible to see that splendorous entity hidden in the abdomen of the 'Viraat Purush'. Presence of Brahm is witnessed and experienced in the form of this vast visible universe even as presence of musk inside the body of the deer is deduced by its sweet fragrance spread all around the deer. Once again, even as the deer runs madly in search of the musk unknowing that it is present inside its own body, the creatures run around madly in the world seeking peace and happiness unaware of the fact that the pitcher of ambrosia is present in their own hearts.

The significance of this word is the fact that the whole creation was present in the bosom of Narayan as the primordial embryo called 'Hiranyagarbh'. From this embryo emerged Brahma, the 4-headed one who was the offspring of Narayan and he created the rest of the world as we know it. In essence, therefore, this 'Hiranyagarbh' is like the embryo in the womb of the mother represented by Narayan, while Brahma represents the offspring of Narayan, and the rest of the creation is a progeny of Brahma.

There appears to be a lot of dichotomy and confusion about the various names. Well, the Vedantic/Upanishadic version is the standard version—which states that Ishwar (Brahm) is the causal body, Hiranyagarbh is the subtle body, and Viraat Purush is the gross body at the invisible macrocosmic level of creation. There are many Purans and sub-Purans, and it is there that the mixing up appears. Briefly, Narayan, Vishnu and Viraat Purush are treated as synonyms, while Hiranyagarbh and Brahma are one. At other places, Vishnu is Hiranyagarbh as well as Viraat Purush and Ishwar (Lord). He is also Mahadeo, though generally Shiva is known by this name.]

9. That patriarch of the creation known as the 4-headed Brahma, the great grandfather, turned his face in the different directions and meditated. Turning towards the East, he mediated upon the word 'Bhu', the hymns called Gayatri, the Rig Veda and the Fire God. Next, he turned his head to the West and mediated upon 'Bhuvaha', the 'Tristup Chandas', the Yajur Veda and the Wind-God. Then, he turned his head to the North and meditated upon 'Swaha', the 'Jagati Chandas', the Sam Veda the Sun-God. Finally, facing South he meditated upon 'Maha', the 'Anustup Chandas', and the Moon-God. As a result, all these entities were produced one after another in the sequence described here (9).

[Note :- (i) The Chandas are a special type of poetic composition used by Brahma to create the texture of the fabric of knowledge in the form of the Vedas. The material used to make this fabric was the profound wisdom and the essential truths of creation as enshrined in the Vedas. The Chandas referred to here are the following— (i) Gayatri Chanda—it has 3 steps, each having 8 letters or syllables. Hence, there are total 24 letters or syllables. (ii) Trishtup Chanda—it has 4 lines, each having 11 letters or syllables. Total number of letters or syllables = 44. (iii) Jagatai Chanda—it has 6 lines of 8 letters or syllables each. There are total 48 letters or syllables. (iv) Anushthup Chanda—it has 4 lines of 8 letters or syllables each. There are total 32 letters or syllables in it.

(ii) This verse shows the process by which Brahma had created the various worlds as well as the different bodies of supreme and profound knowledge as contained in the Vedas. The Chandas are poetical composition styles and they were envisioned by him in order to compose his thoughts and mould them into the verses of the Vedas.

(iii) The 4 worlds created by him are the following— ‘Bhu’ (representing the earth) ‘Bhuvaha’ (representing the sky from surface of the earth and extending up to the ionosphere), ‘Swaha’ (representing the heavens beyond the earth's magnetic field where the divine Gods are supposed to reside), and ‘Maha’ (the higher world and the exalted creatures who would inhabit it).

(iv) According to Brahmaand Puran (BP) and Vaaman Puran (VP), there are 7 stratas or layers of the world above the earth —(i) Bhu—meaning earth (BP 3, 4, 2-18), (ii) Bhuvaha —the atmosphere of the earth (BP 3, 4, 2-19), (iii) Swaha —the space beyond, where the Gods live; the heavens (BP 3, 4, 2-21), (iv) Maha —the 4th world, 1000 Yojans (1 Yojan = 8 miles) above the heaven; here great sages and seers live (BP 3,4, 2-21; VP 52, 21-22), (v) Jalaha —the water world; cows and humans live here (BP 3, 4, 2-22; VP 52-22), (vi) Tapaha —it is 60 millions Yojans higher than Jalaha Loka; ascetics live here (BP 3, 4, 2-24; VP 52-23), (vii) Satya — it is 30 millions Yojans above Tapaha Loka; Brahma, Vishnu etc. live here; it is glowing like 1000 suns shining simultaneously (BP 3, 4, 2-25; VP 52-24).

(v) Since every creature needs knowledge to make its existence, evolution and perpetuation possible, it was deemed fit by Brahma to create the necessary knowledge even while he created the creatures, for both of them complemented each other. The creatures on the one hand needed knowledge for not only their existence but also for their propagation and development, while the knowledge would be useless if there was no one to use it on the other hand.]

10. The ‘Viraat Purush’ called Narayan Hari has thousands (i.e. innumerable, countless) heads and eyes. He is a provider of all types of auspiciousness and welfare to all, is all-pervading and omnipresent, immanent and all encompassing, is transcendental, eternal and supreme, is truthful and exists in all the conceivable forms that this creation has taken. Brahma meditated upon this form of Narayan (10).

[Note :- ‘Thousands of heads and eyes’ is a symbolic way of saying that each individual creature was a representative of Narayan Hari. In other words, Narayan Hari had the intelligence and foresight which was thousands of times greater than any known individual entity in this creation. This is the situation just like we have super computers and ordinary computers in today’s world.]

11. The Lord (Narayan) is an embodiment of the whole creation (or conversely, this whole creation is nothing else but a manifestation of Narayan). The whole world’s life is dependent upon him. Brahma had a divine sight of that divine Purush (Viraat) —who is honoured and respected by the whole world, is the sustainer and nourisher of the world, is an image of it, is the supreme Lord of it. He was reclining in a deep sleep state called ‘Yog Nidra’, literally the trance-like state obtained by an ascetic during meditation on the legendary celestial ocean of milk, called ‘Kshir Sagar’. Brahma had this divine view of Narayan while he was meditating upon him (11).

[Note :- The word Narayan here to refers to Lord Vishnu who, according to the legends in the Purans, reclines on a bed made of Sheshnath, the hooded python floating on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk called the ‘Kshir Sagar’. According to this legend, Brahma was created from a divine lotus which emerged from the navel of Vishnu. However, in the context of this Upanishad, the words Hari, Deva, Narayan, ‘Viraat Purush’ and Vishnu are used synonymously.]

12-14. The heart, which is like the core of a fully developed lotus at the end of a long stem facing down¹, produces a constant vibration creating a muffled whistling sound (or a kind of a rasping, hissing sound). A great divine and subtle fire is burning at the center of the heart. The illumination from this fire lights up the whole world in all its 10 directions².

In the middle or center or core of that subtle fire is a thin and filament-like tongue of flame pointing upwards. The Supreme Being³ has its abode in the center of this filament-like effulgence of energy. That Supreme Being is Brahma (the 4-headed creator), Vishnu (the sustainer who reclines on the Khsir Sagar), 'Ishan' (Shiva, the annihilator of the creation), Indra (the king of Gods), the imperishable 'word' (OM)⁴, and 'Swarat' (literally the king of a place where there is a democracy; here it means the one who is self illuminated and illuminates others with his radiance and splendour, or the Atma of the creature)⁵. This is verily what this Upanishad says (12-14).

[Note :- ¹The shape of the heart like a divine lotus has been elaborately described in the Upanishads dealing with Yoga. The heart has been variably described as a lotus facing down, or a swan with its beak pointing down and its neck like an inverted U. The 'pointing down' is a metaphor for humility and simplicity of heart as opposed to arrogance, haughtiness and pride.

²The 10 directions of the cosmos are the following —north, south, east, west, north-east, south-east, south-west, north-west, up and down— total 10 cardinal points of the compass.

³The 'supreme Being' mentioned above is a reference to Brahm. The effulgence of energy rising up in the core of the louts-like heart represents this Brahm. Even as every source of light produces an image in its likeness in any surface which is reflective, e.g. the mirror, this supreme divine energy present as the Atma in the heart of the cosmic body, produced its image in the form of Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Indra and the other Gods.

⁴The imperishable word referred to in this verse is the divine word OM which stands for the cosmic Naad or Pranav which is the first and the subtlest manifestation of the Brahm. Naad is the cosmic background sound that reverberates in the cosmos, and it is said to the one that provided the energy which started the process of creation. Hence, it is the nearest analogue to Brahm. It is represented by the word OM.

⁵The word 'Swarat' refers to a king in a democracy as for example in the present-day United Kingdom. Similarly, the Supreme Brahm is the head of the whole setup known as the creation, but the actual work of his kingdom is taken care of by Brahma, Vishnu and others, just like the different arms of the government take care of the country called the kingdom of Great Britain. This is the set up at the macro level. Similarly, it is replicated at the micro level of the individual creature where the Atma is the king but he allows the various organs of the body to carry on routine functions of the world without unnecessary day-to-day interference. But at the same time, the Atma is as much a 'sovereign of the individual creature' as the 'monarch is of a democratic monarchy' which is, at the macro level, the cosmos and its king emperor is Brahm.]

Canto 5

135-138. Oh Brahmin! Liberate this mind which is like an elephant trapped in a marsh. Creatures bogged down by delusions and ignorance (135) have been created by Brahm in hundreds and thousands and many more times in myriad numbers of imaginary forms in the past and are being produced even at the present (136). They will continue to be created/produced like drops of water falling off or spraying and scattering from a waterfall. Some have taken birth for the first time, some for more than 100 times (137) and some for innumerable greater number of times, while some have taken only two or three births. Some have been born as 'Kinnars and Gandharvas' (celestial dancers and musicians respectively), others as 'Vidyadhars' (senior celestial demi-Gods who are junior to Gods but senior to Gandharvas and Kinnars) and 'Naags' (the inhabitants of the nether worlds) (138) [135-138].

139-141. The Atma of the creature takes so many forms in this world. Some have assumed the form of a Sun and a Moon, while others have become Varun (the water God), Hari (Vishnu, the sustainer and protector), Shiva (the annihilator or concluder) and Brahma (the patriarch of creation and its creator). Some have become Brahmins (the senior most class in society; they are generally teachers, priests and moral preceptors), while others have become 'Kshatriyas' (the warrior class), 'Vaishyas' (the trading community), 'Shudras' (the servant class) etc. [These 4 classes are the sections into which the Hindu society has been divided] (139).

Some have appeared as vegetations such as herbs, twigs, grass, reeds, trees, fruits, roots and leaves, while others have become lemons, 'Kadambs' (the *Neculea Cadamba* tree), mangoes, coconuts and tobacco plants¹ (140).

There are some having different shapes of rocks, such as boulders, stones and pebbles, mountains called Mahendra, Malay, Sahaya, Mandar, Meru etc.. There are still others in various manifestation of the liquid form —such as the sour ocean, milk, clarified butter, whey, juice of sugar cane and various other water bodies (such as seas, rivers, streams, rivulets, lakes, ponds, wells, tanks, puddles etc.)² (141) [139-141].

[Note :- ¹This verse no. 140 is very remarkable. It proves that ancient seers knew that the plant kingdom —the botanical kingdom — had 'life' as Atma present in them. They were aware that plants too had life as did the animal kingdom of which we humans are part. In this context, see canto 5, verse no. 10 of this Upanishad as well as canto 6, section 12 of Chandogya Upanishad.

²Again a fantastic revelation. Rocks are made due to different geological and geographical factors, but essentially they constitute the 'element earth' in them. This element is one of the 5 essential elements produced at the time of creation. Similarly, all fluids have 'water' as their basic ingredient, which is also one of the elements produced at the beginning. This human body has these 2 elements —earth and water —as its building blocks; the skin and bones are the earth element while the blood and other fluid parts of the body are the water element.]

142-148. Some rise, some fall, and some rise once again after the fall (142).

Just like the ball bounces up and down, some are propelled by death to rise and fall from the sky (heavens) on to this mortal world. [That is, they keep on oscillating back and forth between the mortal world and the heavens in a continuous cycle of birth and death. See also note to verse no.151-152 below.] There are some who are so stupid and

foolish that they take thousands of births and suffer the horrors, troubles and tribulations of the world (143) inspite of the fact that they have acquired knowledge and know what is the correct path and the truth.

The pure essential entity called the Atma, which has great potentials, is beyond the purview of both circumstance and time. [Please also refer to canto 6, verse no. 61 in this context of the Atma using various forms.] (144)

But this Atma assumes a body out of its own free will (i.e. without any compulsion to do so). It becomes a creature which gets trapped, or comes under the influence of various 'Vasanas' (worldly desires, passions and lust), which in turn leads it to being under the control of the mischievous, restless, fickle and unstable mind. The mind gets powered by various 'Sankalps' (the different ambitions, volitions, imaginary hopes) and in an instant it imagines that there is a vast sky, and in the sky the seed of 'sound' germinates. This isolated and solitary sound wave becomes progressively graver, denser, more powerful and stronger, until it consolidated itself to form a 'wind'¹ which is immense in strength and punch as is evident during hurricanes and tornados (147-148) [142-148].

[Note :- ¹Sound cannot travel in a vacuum. So, first the mind created the sky, the void. Then it imagined that there is some sound in it which, incidentally, is the subtlest of the 5 basics elements which have been used as the building blocks upon which the creation has been erected or created. Since sound needs a medium to propagate itself, the logical next creation of the mind was the medium called 'ether' which was essentially created to fill the void and to carry the sound waves. Since waves have a tendency to coalesce and garner sufficient strength to increase in their frequencies and strength, this sound wave created a force that was called 'wind'. Initially, there was only a mild sound wave, but in due course of time, the wave gathered sufficient energy and it acquired strength so much so that the wave became a forceful entity called wind which has the howling 'sound' when it blows hard to prove that it is essentially 'sound wave'.]

149-150. Then the seeds of perception of touch sprouted from the wind (and this is why we 'feel' the soft wind against our faces when we stand near the ocean, or the blow of a howling storm when we are caught unwarens in one). By constant collision and friction between these two perceptions of the sound and touch that have already made their appearances in the shape of the sky and the wind respectively, 'fire' is produced. [This fire is the 3rd of the 5 basic elements, the earlier two being sound and wind] (149).

When the mind submerges or involves itself in the perceptions of the sound and touch, it gets tormented and scorched by the heat of the fire element (created by the friction between the perceptions of sound and touch). It thinks of something to cool itself, to find something to act as a balm to soothe the scorch created by the fire. This thought of the mind leads it to create the 'water' element (which is the 4th element of creation) and it experiences the coolness provided by water (150) [149-150].

151-152. When all the above mentioned 4 basic elements interplay simultaneously with each other, they make the mind to immediately imagine the next sense of perception, which is smell. With this perception, it instantly experiences that there is something called 'earth' (because smell comes from things which are gross produced on some

foundation or some base having a soil and requiring such conducive factors as humidity, temperature, various aromatic chemicals, pressure, air, atmosphere etc.) (151).

In this way, when the subtle mind gets appended with these 5 subtle elements (space/sound, touch/wind, heat/fire, coolant/water and smell/earth), it abandons its subtleness (because it has acquired these encumbrances for itself) and views the gross body as an energised or electrically charged particle in the sky (152) [151-152].

[Note :- ¹Note to verse nos. 149-152— The ‘sky’, which was originally conceived as something that was ‘void’ or ‘nothing’, gets filled with ‘air’, simply because void can’t exist, and the creation which came into being in this void needed some base for its origin and coming into being. The molecules or atoms of air are in a state of continuous agitation and flux; they collide with each other, they form a chain of molecules which give rise to different layers or strata of air which extend from the surface of this earth to the stratosphere. This continuous turmoil produces ‘sound’. Various physical and chemical processes come into play, producing gases of varying density and characteristic features. Air has particles of dust and different gases, which produce the perception of touch. Friction of the various molecules present in the air produces static electricity which is observed as a scintillating display of atmospheric discharge of electrically charged particles in the sky often observed at the poles. This sparkle of static electric discharge is synonymous with ‘fire’. Perhaps the Upanishadic sage got this brilliant idea when he observed a meteor shower during the night. The two elementary gases hydrogen and oxygen combine to form the molecule H₂O commonly known as ‘water’. With all these essential ingredients in place, the solidifying and cooling down process of nature starts its effect and produces soil and rocks which are symbolised by the ‘earth’ element. Then gravity and magnetic forces come into play, giving density, gravity and grossness, indicative of the grossness or heaviness of not only the earth but also of the air around it. Previously, before gravity and other forces of nature came into play, this air was subtle and very light; it spread universally and uniformly to all the corners of the cosmos. But with the gradual formation of different celestial bodies from the primordial cosmic gases, each having its own gravity and other natural physical and chemical forces, the air was pulled or sucked in, leaving the rest of the space beyond the reach of these celestial bodies into a big void.

²The allusion to the rising and falling of the ball in verse no. 142-143 is indicative of the oscillating forces of nature —the ever expanding and contracting cosmos. Hence, what was originally a vacuum became a veritable thriving forest of vibrant, pulsating and colorful life. The sage describes the evolutionary process in these verses, using the words and concepts that were in vogue in those times when the Upanishads were composed. Since modern science has also proved these basic concepts to be true, we may assume that those sages who composed the Upanishads were very wise and had a deep knowledge of other physical sciences besides metaphysics.]

153-154. That subtle body, known as ‘Puryashtak’ which possesses all the different aspects of ‘Ahankar’ (such as that it is beautiful, strong, powerful, capable of doing so many things or has done so many things, possesses such and such quality or virtue etc.) as well as is empowered by the energy of the intellect which is minuscule like the seed (i.e. almost like a tiny battery that operates a battery-operated instrument), is like the bumble bee humming around the creature’s heart which is like a lotus having 6 petals (153).

Even as a fruit of the 'Vilva' tree (the wood apple tree) ripens on maturity, the mind attains grossness in due course by imagining that it has a glorious subtle body which is conscious and has a definitive form (154) [153-154].

155-157. In the clear, spotless and uncorrupt sky, that divine, primordial, glorious, radiant and sparkling energy created by the mind's potentials to imagine, begins to take a shape just like molten gold begins to take the shape of the cast or mould in which it is poured (155).

A shape resembling the head at the top, the legs at the rear, arms on the side and the abdomen in the center begin to become apparent in it (156).

In due course of time, the manifestation (creation) is complete, and a body with a definitive form, having a specific contour, shape and colour comes into being. It becomes endowed with an intellect, potent (in the form of sperms), strength and vigour, enthusiasm and courage, knowledge and wisdom as well as majesty, fame and powers (157) [155-157].

158-160. That first formed body (of verse nos. 157) was called Brahma, the creator, who is the grandfather and patriarch of all creation. He is able to see and know the three dimensions of time —the past, the present and the future. He observed his own excellent, immaculate and most marvelous and charming form/body (158).

He thought to himself that this 'pure-self', which is enlightened, pure consciousness and as vast and endless as the supreme and infinite entity called the space or sky in which Brahma found himself, has no beginning or an end in sight (159).

'What should be, or what was in the beginning?' As soon as he thought of this question, he got a deep insight into his pure self which is the pure Atma or pure consciousness present in the beginning (160) [158-160].

161-163. He could visualise the various sections and divisions of the different creations that had taken place or occurred in the hoary past. This resulted in the revelation of the sequence of events having different tenures, different tenors, different causes and different effects unfolding themselves like a rolling film on the screen of his memory (161).

Using his powers of creating maverick deceptions and illusions, just by mere determination that he would do it or that he wishes to create a fantastic, stupendous and a marvelous world of illusions, which is beyond imagination, from nothing, he succeed in actually creating it in the void of the sky/space. The world which he created was a world of myriad variations having innumerable permutations and combination of colours, shapes, forms and contours, just like the fascinating and marvelous world of Gandharvas (celestial musicians) is in the heavens¹ (162).

In order to meet the requirements or demands of the creation pertaining to its need for 'Dharma' (prescribed codes of conduct for a particular segment of society in order to keep it regulated and ordered), its need for 'Artha' (finances and other means of support to sustain itself), 'Kaam' (which propelled the creation forward; necessities of procreation), and 'Moksha' (emancipation and salvation; spiritual progress), Brahm created a fantastic array of scriptures and bodies of knowledge (to serve as a ready reckoner or a guide book) as well as the concept of a heaven or a hell (to reward and

promote those who were acting righteously in a disciplined manner and punish those who were reckless, wayward and undisciplined), much like a school principal. In this aspect, Brahm became a judge, a school teacher and a guardian for his creation (163) [161-163].

[Note :- ¹A marvelous verse. This verse should put to rest the debate whether the world is true or false. Brahm acted like a master magician and he projected on the screen of the sky the picture of the cosmos much like we see a movie in a theatre. So if the happenings, the settings, the sequence of events on the screen of a movie theatre are not for real, this analogy would prove the falsehood of the world that we see around us which appears to be so true!]

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Chapter 4:

The Revelation of Creation according to The Upanishads of the Shukla Yajur Veda

4 (a) The Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad:—

Canto--1

1. Once upon a time, a Brahmin named Trishiki went to the divine abode of Lord Aditya (the Sun God) and asked, ‘Oh Lord! What is this body? What is Pran? What is the cause of all this (that exists)? What is the Atma?’

2. He (Aditya) replied, ‘Oh Brahmin! Whatever there is is an image of Shiva. Be convinced of it and know of it as such that the Lord who is eternal, universal and imperishable, is pristine pure and uncorrupt, is holy, divine, faultless and the one who is beyond reproach, who is omnipresent, all-pervading, almighty, majestic and magnanimous, is non-dual and an embodiment of beatitude and felicity—that supreme Lord is a ‘witness to all’ that exists. But the paradox is that he himself has assumed myriad forms just like a red hot piece of iron takes any form but remains ‘iron’ nevertheless. If it is asked which entity is to be truly seen or observed in all that is visible or ‘lighted’ in the form of this multifarious creation, then the irrefutable and emphatic answer would be ‘Truth’ which is a synonym for the almighty Brahm because it dispels or eliminates all ignorance and delusions which is at the base of this creation’.

[That is, if one were to find out the truth in this world having myriad forms and astounding degree of diversity, one would conclude that it is Brahm. The reason for the enquiry is the doubt created by the diversity of the creation, because real ‘truth’ cannot be more than one, it cannot be many and multifarious. Therefore, we also conclude that since the visible world is so diverse that it makes a man dizzy, it has to be non-truth, simply because ‘truth’ can’t be more than one. But the existence of the world cannot be denied outright as it is tangible, visible and witnessed first hand. So, the single essential element of Truth in this variable and diverse world is what is known as Brahm. This Brahm is non-dual and immutable like the universal element known as ‘Truth’. The external variable features of the world are simply delusions created around this ‘truth’ by Maya.] [2].

3. [This verse describes the sequence in which the creation came into being.] Brahm created the ‘Avayakta’ (literally that which is not visible or manifestly evident and cannot be described, but does exist without doubt in a subtle and imperceptible form; here referring to Hiranyagarbha, the subtle body of the cosmos).

From Avayakta was produced 'Mahat' (literally meaning large, huge, vast, majestic and glorious; here referring to the Viraat Purush). Mahat produced 'Ahankar' (meaning the characteristics of pride, ego and a sense of false grandeur and majesty leading to arrogance, haughtiness and hypocrisy). Ahankar created the five 'Tanmatras' (referring to the senses of perceptions, such as touch, sound, sight, taste and smell). The next that came into being, from this Tanmatra, were the five gross elements called 'Mahabhuts' (which are the elements air, space, fire, water and earth). This entire universe has been created by these five elements, in different permutations and combinations, as its building blocks (much like atoms in a molecule, and molecules in any gross material thing in this world) [3].

[Note—The sequence thus becomes:-- (1) Brahm, (2) Avayakta, (3) Mahat, (4) Ahankar, (5) the five Tanmatras, (6) the five Mahabhuts, and (7) the universe as we know it.]

4. What is this world? It is a creation which results from the various faults associated with the five 'Bhuts' (which are earth, water, fire, air and space). How is the same egg-like rounded mass of cosmic jelly, called Pinda (which is the primordial cosmic embryo) divided into various divisions due to the faults associated with the five elements? All the five elements have their origin from the same source, and therefore are expected to be identical. But they aren't. This is because of the varying level of subtlety that they have and the different functions they would perform. These five basic, primary elements of creation combined in varying ratios and proportions, in different permutations and combinations, to give (produce) an infinite variety of products (things) in this creation. This is the reason why the visible world is so multifaceted and varied. Each of its unit possesses a specific and unique character, quality, virtue, potential etc. depending upon a particular configuration in which these primary elements had combined or mixed together to create that particular thing, and this configuration is not repeated again, thereby bestowing a unique character to that particular thing.

Besides this, each unit of creation was assigned different name, exhibited different features, assumed different functions and roles depending upon the place, circumstance, time and context in which they existed. As a result, there came into being uncountable numbers and forms of Gods as well as the creatures and other things in this world [4].

[Note—It is easy to understand this phenomenon. Just like a given set of five primary colours can be mixed together in umpteen numbers of combinations to create an astounding array of colours of various hues and shades that are so varied in their external appearances as to be completely unique in themselves and have no apparent relation to the original ingredients, these five elements of creation (sky, air, fire, water and earth) combine with each other in equally innumerable permutations and combinations, in uncountable ratios and quantities, to give rise to things (units of creation) of varying subtlety and grossness and of such stupendous variations that no two units resembled one another, no two units were identical, and each one of them had its unique character and identity. The possibilities in which these five primary elements could be mixed or combined were infinite, and therefore the possibilities of type of creatures and material things formed by this mixing or combination were also infinite. And so came into being this fascinatingly magnificent, stupendously multifarious and astoundingly varied creation.]

5. The 'sky' or space (Akash)¹ element has five subtle divisions or forms—Antakaran (the discriminatory intellect; discriminatory powers; wisdom; morality), Mana (the mind and heart, the thoughts and emotions), Buddhi (the intellect; intelligence), Chitta (the memory; recollection powers; discriminatory intellect; the ability to concentrate and pay attention), and Ahankar (pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness). [Like the sky element, these qualities formed were the subtlest ones in creation. Again, like the sky element, they couldn't be seen independently but only in the context of other elements. For example, the same Mana and Buddhi appear to be different in different creatures. No two individuals will have the same level of wisdom and intelligence. It will depend on a variety of other factors just like the sky showing different colours depending upon numerous factors such as moisture, dust particles and other impurities, presence of clouds, angle of sunlight etc.]

The 'wind' or air (Vayu) element has five subtle divisions or forms---Samaan (that wind which controls circulation in the body), Udaan (that helps in upliftment of the soul; it helps the body to get up from a reclining position; it moves up inside the body), Vyan (that which pervades throughout the body maintaining equilibrium), Apaana (that wind which is inhaled and passes down the body; helps in ingestion, digestion and excretion of food), and Pran (the vital wind that is regarded as the spark of life inside the otherwise dead and inane gross body; exhaled breath). [The same wind/air element serves different functions in the body.]

The 'fire' (Agni) element takes the following subtle forms---the ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose. [These are the organs of perception in the body and are obviously gross in form, but the fire element resides in a subtle form in them. This stanza means that the fire element resides in these five external organs of the body to keep them active and energised. That is why they feel 'warm' to touch. When a man dies, the fire element leaves the body, and consequentially these organs feel 'cold' to touch.]

The 'water' (Apaha) produced the following five Tanmatras, or senses, such as hearing (pertaining to the ears), touch (pertaining to skin), sight (pertaining to eyes), taste (pertaining to tongue), and smell (pertaining to nose). [This stanza indicates the flow of blood in all the organs of the body, because it is the blood flowing in the veins and capillaries along with the sensations flowing in the nerves present in the body that these organs are able to carry on the functions of perceptions specific to them. Blood is a fluid and it is one of the forms in which the water element lives in the body to keep it alive and active.]

The 'earth' (Prithivi) element produced the following---voice (or mouth), hands, legs, anus and genitals. [These are the organs of action. The earth element is the grossest of the five elements in symbolic terms of level of erudition, wisdom and intellectual development, and the ability to think and discriminate. This is because it is the heaviest element and marked by a propensity to sink and settle at the lower level instead of rising high and up like the air or fire elements. It has a tendency to pull down instead of giving a lift upwards. That is why these organs where the earth is a dominant element can't think for themselves, and are regarded as the grossest in the hierarchy of organs in the body. They are under the command and control of the mind-intellect as well as the five organs of perceptions. They depend upon their higher brethren to functions.] [5].

[Note--¹According to the philosophy of Vedanta, the Akash or space element referred above is the various spaces that encircle and envelop the entity that gives the sky or space its nomenclature. According to Vedanta, there are five types of subtle skies or spaces called 'Panchakash'. These five subtle skies encircle the following—(i) food 'sheath', (ii) vital air sheath, (iii) mental sheath, (iv) intellectual sheath, (v) and bliss sheath.

Everything that exists does so in any one of these spaces. Every nook and corner where there is no solid or liquid is filled with space or 'Akash', which is a synonym of sky. It is omnipresent, all-pervading and all-encompassing.

That is, these three forms of the skies, the outer, the inner and that which is present inside the heart, are all the same; there is no distinction or demarcation or boundary or fundamental difference between any two skies. The apparent boundary or limitation imposed on the sky by the physical body or the membrane of the heart is only deceptive in nature. Once a person dies, for example, his body perishes, and the space present inside the heart merges indistinguishably with the space present inside the body when the body is cremated or decays when buried, and they together merge with the vast space present outside the body.

This verse outlines how the different parts of the body were formed from the primary elements in their descending order of subtlety, and ascending order of grossness.]

6. Gyan (truthful and incisive knowledge of reality), Sankalp (resolve, volition, determination, vows, aspirations), Nischaya (firmness of resolve and determination; certainty, surety, lack of doubt and ambiguity), Anusandhan (research and analysis; deep insight into anything), and Abhimaan (ego, pride, vanity, haughtiness, arrogance and hypocrisy)---these activities of a creature are 'done' (instigated, inspired, provoked) by the sky or space element, and they are the objects of the 'Antahakaran'. [That is, they are the objects on which the discriminatory intellect applies its wisdom and powers of discrimination. It is the subtle body of the creature consisting of the mind and intellect as well as the heart that inspires and propels it to make various determinations and have different aspirations based on its experience and information. The creature's intellect directs it towards any action when it is reasonably certain that it would be successful in its endeavours. First it makes a resolve, then it researches about it, is certain of its ability to successfully accomplish it based upon the knowledge gathered, and this fills it with pride of its capabilities and potentials. Since the 'sky' element controls his intellect, wisdom, mind, heart and the sense of pride as described in verse no. 5, it is deemed to have sway over the above virtues and characteristics of a creature.]

'Samikaran' (an equation, to strike a balance or maintain equilibrium in the body), Unnayan (to lift up, elevate, levitate, enhance), Grahan (to accept, hold, imbibe, grasp, catch, acknowledge), Srawan (to hear; the vibrations produced by sound in the ear), and Shwas (breath; inhalation and exhalation)—these are the activities done or controlled by the 'wind' element. They are the objects of the vital wind called Pran.

[As described above in verse no. 5, all these functions of the body are controlled by the various vital winds present inside the body of the creature. The Pran is considered the principle wind in as much as all other winds have any relevance only till the time the creature is alive; they lose their importance and relevance when the Pran makes its exit from the body and the creature dies. This fact has been emphasised in a number of Upanishads, such as Chandogya, Brihad-Aranyaka amongst others.]

The various senses of perceptions of the body, such as to hear the spoken words or the sense of hearing, to feel anything or the sense of touch, to see anything or the sense

of sight, to determine the taste of anything or the sense of taste, and to smell anything or the sense of smell—all these are the activities of the ‘fire’ element (because it is the fire element in the form of life-giving warmth, energy, stamina, vigour and vitality inherent in this element that enables the organs of perception to function and to put to effect these perceptions, as is obvious when we consider the case of a dead body which does not perceive anything). These perceptions or senses come under the jurisdiction of the organs of perception (such as the ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose respectively). All these senses of perception depend upon the ‘water’ element.

[This is because the water element keeps the body well nourished and healthy to felicitate the proper functioning of these organs of perceptions. Water is present in many forms in the body, such as blood, lymph, mucous, enzymes, hormones etc., or all parts of the body that are not solids or dry like the bones and the skin. Therefore, the role that water plays in the body can never be underestimated.]

And finally, to speak, to give, to move, to excrete or eliminate the waste, and procreation or sexual gratification are the activities of the ‘earth’ element. These are the activities falling within the domain of the organs of action (such as the mouth, hand, leg, anus and genitals respectively).

The subjects pertaining to the organs of perception and organs of action are basically the same as those of the five ‘Tanmatras’ (the sense of various perceptions) and the five ‘Prans’ (vital wind forces) respectively.

[The subjects pertaining to the organs of perceptions and the perceptions themselves are obviously the same. For instance, the eye has the perception of sight, and both have the same target—any object that has a physical shape, a form, a colour which can be ‘seen’. The ears and the perception of hearing also likewise have the target—any sound that can be heard. This applies to the other organs as well. Similarly, the five organs of action and the five vital winds are inter-related. These five organs function normally as long as the five winds perform normally. Should any of the winds fail to carry out its functions in a proper way, the corresponding organ would malfunction. For instance, if the Apaan wind dithers, the anus malfunctions. If the Pran fails, the speech becomes incoherent and the man stutters/stammers. If the Udaan wind loses its strength, the legs won’t lift the body. And so on and so forth.]

Similarly, memory, intelligence and thought (Chitta) as well as ego and pride (Ahankar) are inherent and an integral part of the intellect and mind (Buddhi and Mana) respectively.

[The intellect is wise, erudite and enlightened, and therefore it does not have any sense of ego and pride, while the mind is under the influence of the information that it receives from the various sense organs of perception and responses of the organs of action, and therefore it feels proud of its capabilities and astounding potentials. Refer also to Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 7, Section 3-7.] [6].

[Note—There should be no confusion about what is being said in this verse. Basically it says that all the different functions of the body—from the subtlest such as functioning of the intellect, right up to the grossest such as the elimination of waste matter through the excretory organs—are manifestations of the inherent virtues to perform specific functions that are present in the five primary elements that came into existence. At the same time as controlling the functioning of the different units of the body, these elements themselves formed the body. So, since the body is a composite form of these five elements, the

functions carried out by the different organs along with the unique characters, temperaments and inherent nature exhibited by the creature would indicate the proportion of the element that plays a dominant role in this creature's personal profile or personality as well as the functioning of each unit of its body. This is the reason why we have such a complex zoological kingdom where any one given class of animal has no resemblance with the other. Thus, by analyzing the characteristic features and behaviour of any given creature or even the functioning of any given unit of its body, we can deduce which of the five elements is dominant there.]

7. 'Avakash/Avakaash' (literally meaning vacant space, where there is no activity; retirement), 'Vidhut' (to move, to shake, to remove), 'Darshan' (to see, to visualise, to have a glimpse, to perceive), 'Pindikaran' (to combine everything into a homogenous rounded mass or ball or a spherical object to remove distinctions between different things), and 'Dharna/Dhaarna' (to bear, to have firm faith, conviction and belief)—these are the subtle forms that are the subjects of the five Tanmatras in their subtlest form (such as the sky, wind, fire, water and earth elements)¹ [7].

[Note—¹To understand the import of this verse, we must take into account verse no. 5 and 6 above. The five Tanmatras are the five senses of perception (hear, smell, taste, touch and see), and they all depend on the various organs of perception (ear, nose, tongue, skin and eye respectively) which are the gross manifestations of the five basic elements of creation (sky, wind, water, earth and fire respectively). The ears hear sound from the vast space surrounding the creature; the wind element enables one to move around; the fire element lights up the realm and enables the creature to see, while, at the same, time keeping the world warm, a factor most essential for life to thrive; the water element helps in dissolving everything uniformly without distinction, mixing all the ingredients into a homogenous mass or dough out of which a ball can be made, which in turn symbolises the primordial egg from which the whole cosmos evolved in due course; and the earth element which bears the burden of the entire creation and acts as its ground or base or foundation.]

8. Therefore, there are said to be twelve organs¹ through which the entire physical world has been revealed. The creation has been classified into three categories—'Adhyatmik' (the causal world pertaining to the Atma or spirit), 'Adhibhautik' (the gross world visible around us on the earth), and 'Adhidaivik' (the subtle world of the Gods).

There are twelve Gods such as the Moon, Brahma (the creator), Lokpals (the custodians of the different directions of the world), Vayu (the Wind God), the Sun, Varun (the Water God), Ashwini-kumars (the twin sons of the Sun God and regarded in mythology as the Gods' physician), Agni (the Fire God), Indra (the king of Gods; the controller of life giving rains), Upendra (Lord Vishnu, the sustainer), Prajapati (the care takers of the subjects of creation created by Brahma and responsible for carrying the process of creation forward), and Yam (the Death God and who judges the creature after death).

They are the patron Gods of the twelve organs and they have their subtle abode in the twelve principal Naadis (nerves or veins or ducts or channels) of the body associated with these organs. These twelve Gods are also called the subtle parts of Pran or the vital wind which is synonymous with life or the Atma or pure consciousness of the creature². A person who is acquainted with the twelve organs, their gross and subtle forms as well

as their patron Gods, is indeed considered to be learned, sagacious, wise and scholarly [8].

[Note—(1)¹The twelve organs referred to in the above verse are the following:-- the 6 organs of perception (ear, eye, nose, tongue, skin) + 6 organs of action (mouth, hand, leg, anus, genital) + heart + mind = 12.

(2)² The Gods are the personifications of the various forces of Nature that govern life. Since the Atma is an embodiment of life as well as a synonym of life, these so-called Gods are an intrinsic and integral part of the Atma. They cannot be separated from the Atma even as the latter also cannot be separated from the former. Pran and the Atma are also synonyms; both coexist in the body of the creature, and its life depends equally upon both. Whereas the Atma is pure consciousness, the Pran is the vital wind, but the term consciousness is synonymous with life as much as the word Pran. Hence, these twelve Gods represent the Atma performing different functions in their forms; the Atma exercises control over the entire creation in its manifestation as these twelve Gods. The Atma is a composite of these Gods.]

9. [Now the sage describes how the five basic elements of creation called the 'Panch Bhuts' (the sky, air, fire, water, earth) are used in practice to create a perception of the world.]

The space is filled with air or wind. The latter has five forms—Samaan, Vyan, Udaan, Apaana and Pran. The Samaan wind helps in the perception of the spoken word in the form of sound heard through the ears. This sound or word is established in the space of the sky. All that is to be known or learnt by the intellect is done by means of hearing about it, and the organ that does it is the ear. The ear hears or picks up every bit of sound that it comes in contact with. It treats all sounds equally, and does not shut-off one in preference to the other. If the ears are closed, all sounds are eliminated. This is a metaphoric way of saying that the ears are the playing field or the field of activity of the Samaan wind. Since sound travels in open space, the importance of sky element is obvious if the ears have to hear anything. This Samaan wind coordinates the ears and the intellect because the latter would base its decisions on what it hears with the aid of the ears.

The Vyan wind is discerned as the sense of touch and is felt through the medium of the skin. It is established in the air around the body in the space filled with the wind element. The hands are especially empowered to feel this wind (i.e. the hands can 'feel' a thing better than any other part of the body—such as it being soft or hard, the feel of the texture of the object, and feel whether it is hot or cold etc.).

The Mana (mind) gets the 'feel' or 'hang' of the world around it by 'feeling' it or 'touching' it with the hand. To get a better idea of anything, we tend to lift it and turn it over in our hands. The Mana derives greater degree of satisfactions when it holds and feels a thing than merely hearing about it or seeing it. The sense of touch and feel as perceived by the skin of the hand is a notch better than that perceived from any other part of the body. The Vyan wind coordinates the working of the Mana and the perception of touch as exhibited by the hand and skin. This is because this wind is uniformly distributed all over the area where the body is covered by the skin.

The Udaan wind helps the eyes to see things that have a definite shape, size, contours and colour. This wind enables the legs to move and is established in the fire element (i.e. the energy required to move the body is predominantly located in the legs).

When the eye sees something attractive, it inspires the legs to take the body there, and the legs move only when the Udaan wind wants. So, this wind coordinates the working of the eyes and the legs.

The Apaana wind helps the tongue to perceive the sense of taste, and it is present in the lower organs of the body (i.e. the alimentary canal) in the form of the water element. The water element predominates those places where this wind has a major role to play (as is evident from the fact that the tongue is always moist and it needs saliva to taste anything; the digestive juices present in the intestines are in liquid form; the semen is a fluid as is the urine, the latter two being the produce of the genitals and the excretory organs which ironically have a common exit; the stool in the rectum is also semi-solid, indicating the presence of water). If the Apaana wind and the water element do not work in a coordinated fashion, the intake of food, its digestion and excretion would be badly affected. Besides it, if the body does not get proper nourishment, its memory and ability to focus on the job at hand, to study and contemplate etc. take a beating. The attention is diverted and a man gets restless if the flatus gets incarcerated in the intestines; the man feels bloated and hypochondriac. In other words, the functioning of the 'Chitta', i.e. the ability of the mind to stay attentive and fix its self on the job at hand, the perception of taste which enables one to enjoy the food eaten and therefore in better secretion of digestive juices, the movement of food in the intestines and its excretion, as also the production of semen (genital fluids), its movement and its proper implantation in the female organs—all depend upon and are coordinated by the Apaana wind.

Finally, the Pran wind reveals itself in the nose (as breath) and helps it to exhibit the ability to smell. Its other habitat is the anus where the earth element is present in the form of faecal matter (stool). The Pran is synonymous with life as also is food, because life cannot be sustained without either the Pran or the food. Food is produced from earth. Therefore, food and earth are to be treated equally as the fifth element. A wise and erudite person is one who knows this. The nose is able to smell two genres of smells—one that is pleasant such as the aroma of delicious food or the sweet fragrance of flowers, and the other that is foul such as the stinking wind coming out of the anus. The ability to smell is controlled by the Pran wind (breath present in the nose), while at the same time this Pran is a metaphor for the life-sustaining basic ingredients and nourishment present in any food item. Food is grown on earth. The gross part of food from which all nutrients have been extracted by the body accumulates in the rectum. Hence, this food, as excreta, is called 'night soil' or 'night earth', where the word 'night' would stand for something from which life has been removed or extracted, something that is gross in nature. Since such excreta (which is food minus Pran) accumulates in the anus and rectum, the latter are said to be dominated by the earth element simply because food has its natural habitat in the earth. Pran is the wind that coordinates the functioning of life in this creation through the medium of the food, and it lives on earth in the form of all life forms that exist. [9].

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4 (b)

The Paingal Upanishad:--**(Cantos 1-2)****Canto 1**

1. Once, sage Paingal went to sage Yagyavalkya and served him for twelve years. Then he asked the latter to teach him about the mysteries and secrets of 'Kaivalya' (1).

2. Sage Yagyavalkya said, 'In the past or in the beginning, there was only one essential element called 'Sata' or the 'essential truth'. It is called Brahm; it is characterized by such virtues as being eternal and infinite, free from all encumbrances, being without any faults and shortcomings, being an absolute and irrefutable truth, being an embodiment of wisdom, enlightenment, knowledge and erudition, being beatitude and felicity personified, and being a non-dual entity that is one, universal, immutable whole (2).

3. Even as water appears to be present in the mirage seen in a desert, silver appears to be present in the inner shiny surface of the oyster shell, a pillar or a trunk of a tree resembles the male phallus, and crystal appears to have superficial linings, the primary and primordial 'Prakriti'¹, or Nature, having three primary shades of colours such as red (blood-like), white (silver-like) and dark (night-like), was imagined to be present in that 'Sat' (truth). In other words, the Prakriti or Nature was supposed to be an imaginary creation emerging or making its appearance from the primary and eternal 'truth' which was immaculate and untainted. These three colours, present in equal amount and intensity, represented the three Gunas or qualities² that formed the fundamental nature and defined the inherent qualities and virtues of this Prakriti. Since initially they were in equal proportions/ratios, the resultant effect was a neutral entity. In other words, this Prakriti was primarily present as an integral part of Truth known as Brahm, but originally it was 'neutral and colourless' like its principal, the neutral, pure, uncorrupt, taintless, formless and attribute-less Brahm, because all these three colours representing the three basic qualities called Gunas were in equal quantity and neutralized each other. [It was later on when they gradually began to combine with each other in different proportions that they segregated themselves into different shades of colours symbolising different characteristic traits, nature and temperaments present in the countless creatures of the creation revealed as a magnificent and charming world of multiplicity and variety.]

What was initially reflected like an image in a mirror at the beginning of creation was this Prakriti having the three Gunas which were initially present in a neutral state in the principal from which Prakriti was born, and which is known as Brahm. That is, Prakriti was primarily an image or reflection of what Brahm was like—it inherently possessed everything that Brahm possessed as represented by the presence of these three primary colours in it, but it nevertheless remained neutral in the beginning. Since any image must have a principal of which it is a reflection, this Prakriti had Brahm as its primary principal. In other words, what was reflected as Prakriti or Nature was indeed Brahm.

This Brahm was consciousness personified and the primary Truth. This is because only the 'truth' can have an image; we do not see any reflection or image of imaginary things in a mirror. Brahm is consciousnesses because anything that is inherently and fundamentally 'alive' can ever hope to exhibit the powers of creation and imagination, as dead entities cannot create and imagine. Therefore, what this Prakriti reflected was primarily pure truth and consciousness known as Brahm (3).

[Note—¹*Prakriti*-- The word basically means 'nature' with all its connotations. The Chambers dictionary defines it as the power that creates and regulates the world; the power of growth; the established order of things; the cosmos; the external world especially that untouched by man; the inherent qualities in anything that makes it what it is; the essence; the being; the constitution; a kind or order; naturalness; normal feeling; conformity to truth or reality; the inborn mind; the character, instinct or disposition; the vital power; the course of life; the nakedness of truth; the primitive undomesticated condition; the strength or substance of anything; a deity personifying some force of physical nature.

Sir Monier Monier-Williams, in his encyclopedic Sanskrit-English dictionary describes it thus—'making or placing before or at first'.

The word 'Prakriti' has many connotations, viz. the original or natural or basic form or condition of anything; the original or primary nature, character, condition, constitution, temperament, disposition; the fundamental form or shape or essence or pattern or standard or model, rule; Mother Nature which has the active physical natural forces that are responsible for unfolding the creation, its sustenance and annihilation; something that is inherent, innate, genuine, unaltered, unadulterated, basic, normal, bare, naked, crude, integral and stripped of all pretensions; the fundamental pattern, form, standard and model upon which the rest of the things are based; the crude or basic or root or seed form of any word, and by extension of anything expressed; that which decides the existential mode of anything; the coefficient, the multiplier of any fundamental element.

As inherent nature and temperament of a creature, it determines the way the world behaves and thinks; it determines the basic character of the creature and the creation as a whole because the individual creature is but a single unit of the creation.

The word Prakriti also refers to the 'personified will of the Supreme Being in the creation', and it therefore is synonymous with the powers of the Supreme Being personified as Mother Nature in whose womb the entire creation has revealed itself. It is deified forces of Nature and revealed as different renowned and powerful Goddesses.

The Prakriti represents the cosmic creative will of the creator that has revealed itself as the primary female aspect of creation which is known as 'Shakti', while its male aspect is known as the 'Viraat Purush'. The Shakti is the active ingredient or force that creates and regulates everything, while the primary entity or Being whose will this Shakti is implementing is called Brahm who remains passive.

According to the Purans, this Prakriti or Nature has been personified as different Goddesses, while Brahm has been known as Viraat Purush in the terminology of Vedanta or the Upanishads, and Vishnu in the Purans. The Shakti is the female aspect of Purush, and is considered as inseparable from him; in fact they are two halves of the same Brahm. In order to create, Brahm revealed himself in these two primary forces which revealed themselves as the cosmos or Nature. As the different inherent tendencies of a creature, the forces of creation came to be known as Sattva, Raj and Tam which determines and regulates the continuous cycle of creation, sustenance and conclusion. The Purush is the male aspect while his female counterpart is the Prakriti. Since a man resides in this world, he is surrounded by Nature which casts its shadow upon him. All the maverick tricks that

Mother Nature knows create an impression upon a man. He is enthralled and so overwhelmed by the deception created by Nature that he forgets about the falsehoods of what he sees, as well as about the truthful nature of his own pure self. He is deluded by false impressions so much so that they appear to be true to him. Consequentially, he drifts along in the swift currents created by those delusions. He acquires the colours of Prakriti without realising the truth about its falsehood.

According to Sankhya Shastra, Prakriti is the original producer of the material world consisting of the three Gunas or fundamental qualities that are inherent in all the creatures and they decide the character and temperament of that creature depending upon the dominance of one quality over the other two. These three Gunas are—(i) 'Sattwa', or those which are auspicious and righteous and noble, (ii) 'Raja', or worldly qualities marked by such notions as having passions, desires, greed etc. and (iii) 'Tama', or those qualities that are 'dark' by nature, such as those that are categorized as sinful and pervert, leading to a creature's moral downfall.

²The three Gunas-- The three characteristic qualities inherently present in the creature are the three thought textures which bombard the mind. These three thought textures are manifestations of the 'Vrittis and Vasanas' (inherent tendencies or desires) of the creature which mire its soul as a covering or veil.

(a) 'Sata Guna or quality' is the noble, virtuous, auspicious and good qualities present in a creature. It is marked by such high standards of ethical existence that have, as their characteristic features, such qualities as coolness of head, peace, contentedness, humility, devotion, wisdom, mercy, compassion, creativity, selflessness, service, righteousness, virtuousness, holiness and nobility of thought and action etc. As is evident, these qualities are the best qualities that one can have in him; they have a spiritual dimension to them; they are spiritually unlifting and give a divine halo to those who practice them.

(b) 'Raja Guna or quality' covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, desires, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, desire to sustain etc. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the Satwic qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

(c) 'Tama Guna or quality' is the third quality; it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, leading him to such negative traits as sins, vices, perversions, greed, avarice, haughtiness, pride, lust, attachments, yearnings, intoxication, wild behaviour, promiscuity, evils, utter disregard for anything which is righteous, ethical and noble etc.— i.e. in brief, immoral, denigrating and depraved behaviour marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness of misdemeanours. It is the lowest and meanest of the three qualities leading to a person's downfall, ignominy and ruin.

The various permutations and combinations of these three qualities create a particular nature of an individual giving him his individuality and his special characters which are unique to him; they determine his temperament, behaviour, thought process et al. Two individuals having the same external form of the gross body —e.g. two men —might look very much alike but they vary immensely in their nature, habit, behaviour, thinking, outlook, action and deeds, wisdom and way of living. This is what is meant when it said that a creature has to roam in 84 Lakh wombs or forms of life; it is only a metaphor—it does not mean an actual, countable specific number that there are actually and physically 84 Lakh types of bodies of living beings; it only symbolically refers to the huge possibilities that are possible with these three 'Gunas' and their different combinations that can imaginably produce a myriad variety of creation that can be created with these three basic qualities and their various sub classes of qualities.

The Satwic quality or Guna is the veil covering the soul like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort. It is the foremost and the best amongst the three characteristics of a creature such as good and positive virtuous such as righteousness, creativity, noble deeds and thoughts, the positive qualities of service, benevolence, mercy, devotion, wisdom, holiness, piety etc.

The Rajsic quality or Guna can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality. Rajsic tendencies are the second best quality which produces worldly desires, ambitions, passions, selfishness, various obsessions, desire to sustain and expand etc.

The Tamsic quality or Guna covering the soul is like a foetus in the womb covered by the embryonic membrane—they cannot be removed easily and require diligence, effort, dedicated and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the three characteristics, the worst type to possess, and is marked by such negative traits as sin, evil, perversions, immorality, vices, misdemeanors, anger, inertia, delusions, deception, gloom, ignorance et al.

The proportion of the three Gunas decides the nature, natural temperament, tendencies, habits and inclination of the creatures. For example, a person with a greater proportion of 'Satvic' (noble) characteristic will be considered nobler than a man with a greater proportion of 'Rajsic' or 'Tamsic' qualities. So we can say that sages, seers, prophets, scholars and generally enlightened persons have a high degree of 'Satvic' qualities in them; kings and householders who live a noble life are example of those with higher amount of 'Rajsic' quality in them; while sinners, killers, drunks, rowdy elements, cheats etc. are those people with higher 'Tamsic' quality in them. These Gunas have direct bearing on the personality of a man.]

4. When that primary Prakriti¹, which was initially as pure as its principal Brahm (as described in verse no. 3), became corrupted by these three Gunas due to their gradual polarization, it formed an invisible veil covering the 'truth' or Brahm. [In the beginning, the Prakriti was as transparent, neutral and colourless as Brahm. But gradually, due to the processes of evolution, the three primary colours began to separate and acquire their own independent hues, and they further mixed with each other in infinite permutations and combinations to create un-imaginable hues of colours which symbolically represented as many character traits and personalities of the creatures that would emerge in the unfolding creation.

The Prakriti lost its homogeneity, uniformity, neutrality and transparency in the process as a result of polarization of colours, and hence the covering around the Truth (Brahm) became non-transparent and acquired an ever-changing hue and texture. What was primarily untainted and colourless became tainted with the changing hues and varying shades of the three primary colours representing the basic character traits and virtues (Gunas) that prevail in this creation. The possibilities of colours that could be formed by mixing of these three primary colours in different proportions were simply immense and mind-boggling, thereby opening the Pandora's Box of myriad variety of creation and its equally diverse inhabitant creatures with different characteristics. The diversity was so marked that no two units of this creation looked alike.]

This was called 'Avaykta Avaran Shakti' or the invisible and un-manifest veil that formed a covering around the almighty power represented by the power of 'truth' that it shrouded. This power of Truth was Brahm. Now this Authority had to act from behind

this veil, and therefore this veil representing Prakriti appeared to have all the powers that Brahm possessed, because from the point of the viewer he saw this transparent veil of Prakriti, which was covering Brahm, as the entity that was actually displaying all the virtues he had thought were possessed by Brahm. So he began to identify Prakriti with Brahm in his ignorance of the actual fact. The supreme Lord who was reflected in this veil was the pure consciousness (or Brahm).

[Suppose a person wears a full body-covering apron—from the head to the foot. We would recognise him by this apron and its colour etc. simply because we have never seen him without it; we haven't seen his physical body and how he actually looks. The same thing applies here to Brahm. No one has seen Brahm, but he is recognised in the way he has revealed himself as this visible world. When Brahm's Gunas, represented by these three primary colours, failed to retain their balance, they created a 'coloured' closely fitting veil around Brahm. Whatever the characteristic traits these colours represented began to be closely associated with Brahm. In other words, that Brahm, which has been described by the scriptures as being basically neutral, attribute-less and invisible, began to be viewed with these tainted characteristics. Thus, the fundamentally attribute-less Brahm acquired attributes as represented by the three basic Gunas in their infinite varieties which were the result of infinite ways in which these Gunas could combine and mix in this creation. This is the reason why the visible creation has such diversity and variation.]

That Lord is called 'Ishwar'² or the lord of all because he keeps Maya (delusions and ignorance) under his control; he is the cause of creation, its sustenance, and its conclusion. Indeed he resembles the seed in which the creation is present as a sprout. He is the one who can make this entire universe which is integrally present in his bosom to emerge or reveal itself. He unfolds this vast theatre of creation and appoints its actors depending upon the past deeds of these individual creatures.

[That is, even as a director appoints actors and others according to their competence, knowledge, skills, abilities and aptitudes as well as their experience, and other factors as time they have put in the theatre, whether they have done a good job etc., the cosmic director named Ishwar also assigns specific duties to each individual creature according to what they have learnt in their past by suffering or enjoying the consequences of their deeds, whether they have done any good deed or not, whether they remain mired in the worldly muck or sincerely wish to rise higher in the echelons of spiritual hierarchy, etc.]

Similarly, he causes the canvas of the world to fold up when the deeds of the creatures become degrading to such an extent that the entire setup is about to sink into the nether world of sins and vices. It is at that time that he winds up the theatre and retires its actors till the time a new theatre group is set up by him!

At the time of conclusion of the creation, it is withdrawn into the primary source from where it had come into being just like the folded canvas and props of the theatre are stored in the warehouse with the owner once the company winds up.

[When the time is up, all the colourful props and background canvases that help to conjure up a fascinating but imaginary world of magnificent variety and charm on the stage by the theatre company, are neatly folded up and tucked away in the store of the owner. This analogy is used to show how the master and lord of creation winds up the show when he is fed up with its actors, who in the case of the creation are the numerous

creatures having different characters and attributes just like the different actors of a theatre who display varied talents. When any actor does not improve himself even after long stint of practice and practical exposure at work, the director would be left with no choice but to retire him, or shunt him to some inconsequential job. This is exactly what the Lord of creation does in order to keep the creation under check and functioning properly.] (4).

[Note--¹When this Prakriti having these three Gunas as represented by the three colours of red, white and black formed a symbolic veil over the 'truth', the latter appeared to be tainted by these three colours. This is evident when we wrap anything with a coloured piece of a see-through plastic foil; the enclosed object appears to have lost its originality and assumes the colour of the covering. This also applies to Brahm. When the latter was covered by the three Gunas of Prakriti, it became to be recognised as Prakriti. They became synonymous with each other, though Brahm was free from the tainting effects of the three Gunas. It must be noted here that in verse no. 3 it is clearly stated that these three Gunas represented by the three colours were inherently present in Brahm even before they began to taint it with their colours, but initially they were in a neutral state because they were in equilibrium. It was only when imagination took over and Maya or delusions arising out of ignorance had the upper hand that this situation arose whereby Brahm began to be identified with corrupted Prakriti.

This creation is merely a combination of different qualities and virtues represented by these three primary colours, and since the permutations and combinations with which these three colours can combine are endless, we have as many varieties of creatures displaying as many uncountable numbers of qualities and virtues. But in all this, that Brahm is merely a mute witness; he has got nothing to do with this. Taking the examples cited in verse no. 3, the water in a mirage has an illusionary presence but a thirsty man believes in its presence and rushes towards it, never to find it. On the contrary, this water moves ahead of him and keeps him drowned in falsehoods and illusions until he dies of endlessly pursuing it. The same logic applies to the oyster shell; no one can find silver trying to seek it in the shell, but since he has himself seen it there he would be convinced of its presence notwithstanding anyone telling him that he is mistaken in his beliefs. Therefore, what appears on the surface is not always the truth! So though Prakriti or Nature was deemed to be pure like its principal Brahm, it turned tainted because of intervention of Maya which caused delusions based on ignorance that led to all sorts of hallucinations about Brahm and Prakriti.

There is another spin off here. The world is Brahm, and vice versa—this is the constant refrain and universal philosophy expounded by the Upanishads and forms the basis of the great tenets of Advaitya Vedanta, the philosophy of non-duality. The reason why such great and astounding degree of variety exists in this creation inspite of this non-dual nature of Brahm is explained above. It is these three Gunas which combine in infinite ways to colour the same Brahm with myriad colours of varying hues and shades that this creation appears so varied and diverse that no two units of it are alike. This is because this creation is an image or manifestation of Brahm, and therefore the colour of Brahm would reflect itself in this creation. But a wise man knows that once the misleading colours are washed off, the primary colours remain, which is a metaphoric way of asserting that the same universal and uniform identity of Brahm as Truth would emerge once all delusions and ignorance surrounding it are dispelled.

²*Ishwar*—"Ishwar" is the cosmic causal body of the immanent, all-pervading and omnipresent supreme Consciousness known as the 'Brahm'. This Ishwar has the counterpart in the individual creature or Jiva as *Pragya*—one who is aware,

knowledgeable, wise, enlightened, intelligent, erudite, sagacious, expert and skilled. These are the attributes of Brahm who has revealed himself at the cosmic level in the body known as Ishwar, and at the micro level in the causal body of the individual creature as its Atma known as Pragya. Why is the causal body 'Pragya'? It is because of the light of wisdom, enlightenment etc. emanating from the self-illuminated Atma that resides inside its inner chambers. This Atma is surrounded by the bliss sheath much like the embryo surrounded and protected in the mother's womb by the embryonic membranes. The Atma is 'blissful' because it is Brahm personified.]

5. The potential to 'create' that is inherently present in that supreme transcendental Brahm then created the situation when the second quality called 'Raja' became a predominant quality, and this gave rise to the character trait called 'Vikshep' (which is literally the power to create doubts, confusions, uncertainties, perplexities, fickleness, restlessness and agitations in the creature). This quality had great potentials, and was responsible for much of the formidable delusions that marked the worldly creature's nature, temperament and inclinations. That is why it was called 'Mahat', literally meaning great, formidable and stupendous in reach and potentials. This formed the second layer of the veil around the supreme consciousness called Brahm represented by the supreme Authority called Ishwar.

Surrounded by this veil of Vikshep, the supreme conscious entity that was reflected through it was called Hiranyagarbha. This entity has the quality of Mahat, or is of great importance and potentials as far as the creation is concerned. It is part visible and part invisible. In other words, it is like something seen through a translucent screen (5).

[Note—The entity that was seen in verse no. 4 was like something seen through a transparent screen, while that seen in verse no. 5 is like that seen through a translucent one. The difference is obvious—in the first case the sight is very clear and the original entity is seen in its almost pristine form, whereas in the second case it is tainted by the intervening part opacity of the screen. For example, when anything is seen through a plain glass we observe its true form and colour, while when the same thing is seen through a tainted glass then the colour of the object seen is bound to be affected by the colour of the intervening sheet of glass. In verse no. 4, the pure and uncorrupted form of Brahm or pure consciousness is observed because the intervening veil is of a 'Sata' quality which is a metaphor for a purity and holiness, and therefore its good virtues are discernible. That is why it was described by the epithet 'Ishwar'. In verse no. 5 it is seen through a tainted veil which has 'Raja' quality in predominance, and this affects its view and the pure conscious appears to be partly immaculate and holy, and partly affected by the virtues that are characteristics features of this deluding world of faults and illusions; it is like seeing a mirage. This view presented a tainted vision of Brahm, and it was called Hiranyagarbha because this distortion was the incubator in which the egg of the future world would hatch.

According to the philosophy of Vedanta, this Hiranyagarbha is the macrocosmic subtle body of the creation; it is like the cosmic egg in which the first signs of the forthcoming creation—which is a metaphor for the first signs of delusions—made their appearance. Even as by merely seeing a egg it is not possible to describe or forecast what type of creature with what type of characters, features, attributes and nature etc. would emerge from it, it was impossible to say what this Hiranyagarbha foretold or portended. Further, the forthcoming creation was inherently present in this shapeless primordial egg, but the shape of the would-be creation just could not be discerned or perceived or

imagined in it; this shape was unpredictable. This is what is meant by saying that it was partly visible and partly invisible.]

6. From the quality of 'Vikshep Shakti' (i.e. the power to create delusions and confusions), which was subtly present in Hiranyagarbha (as described in verse no. 5), there emerged the third quality of 'Ahankar', or ego and pride, which in its wake led to the creation of such traits as arrogance, haughtiness and hypocrisy. This is the grossest form of 'Shakti', or the powers and potentials that were depicted by the supreme entity that was veiled by Prakriti.

In other words, the supreme consciousness, when seen through the veil of delusions (verse no. 4), appeared to have the notion of 'Ahankar' (or pride) in it. This entity that had this trait of Ahankar in it was called 'Viraat Purush', or the gross form of Hiranyagarbha. That is, this Viraat was the personification of the supreme Brahm's potentials to show its abilities that it can do, and achieve success in doing even the unimaginable and most formidable of tasks, such as creating this vast universe from literally nothing, a creation that is visible as well as invisible, a creation that is immobile as well as mobile, a creation that is mortal as well as immortal, a creation that is so true-looking but essentially hollow and false, and which is a metaphor for the greatest of paradoxes and delusions.

This Viraat form, or the vast and colossus form of the supreme consciousness marked by the virtue of Ahankar, was called Vishnu. He is the sustainer and nourisher of the entire gross world; he is the chief Purush or the Lord of this creation. [In other words, Brahm's potentials and powers to sustain and nourish what was created is exhibited by Vishnu; he is the personification of these virtues of Brahm. Since this world was gross and needed an entity that could fit into its mould, this Vishnu is also deemed to be the gross form of the invisible and subtle, the un-manifested and attributeless supreme transcendental Being called Ishwar.

[Vishnu had the quality of Ahankar because of the fact that Brahm was now proud of his creation as well as of the fact that he can maintain and develop it in his form as Vishnu. He was also proud of the fact that he has the potentials, powers and authority to create the patriarch Brahma, and the concluder Shiva. As has already been stated earlier in verse nos. 4-5, the very fact that Brahm's neutrality was lost due to the dominance of one or the other Gunas (qualities), there is no wonder in his having got tainted by Ahankar which is in itself a negative trait. See also note to verse no. 10 of this Canto. This observation that 'Ahankar' is so powerful a negative trait that it was even able to subdue the supreme Lord of creation known as Brahm and entangle the otherwise immaculate divine entity in the web of delusion and self-grandeur leads one to be wary of this dangerous pitfall in one's own life lest it would also lead to one's own downfall. It ought to be noted here that more than the actual words of the texts of the Upanishads, it is the hidden meaning and subtle message that they contain that is of greater importance for the general mental, ethical and spiritual welfare and good of mankind. So it is of utmost importance that the texts should be interpreted correctly to bring out the essence in them.]

Even as all entities in this creation have an Atma, this Vishnu also was no exception¹. From his Atma was produced the 'Akash' or sky or space element. From the former was produced the 'Vayu' or air or wind element; from this was created the 'Agni' or fire or energy element; from it was produced the 'Apaha' or the water element; and from it emerged the 'Prithivi' or earth element². From them emerged the five

‘Tanmatras’³ or the different senses of perceptions, and the three inherent ‘Gunas’⁴ or qualities that are invariably present in all the units of the creation, i.e. in all the creatures (6).

[Note—¹According to the concepts of Vedanta, this ‘Viraat Purush’ known as Vishnu represents the sum total of all the gross bodies of creation. That is, he stands as the tree of which the rest of the creation is one or the other part; or the creation is the visible aspect of the Viraat. As the word itself implies, Viraat is vast and colossus, with infinite dimensions. Now, each gross body has a subtle body, and that is Hiranyagarbha as far as the creation at the macro level is concerned. This body must have a third body—and this is the causal body which is called Ishwar. This Ishwar is therefore that causal body which is the ‘cause’ for the entire creation. The causal body harbours an Atma which is covered in the veil of Vasanas and Vrittis, or the various worldly passions, desires, attachments and delusions that are the inherent tendencies and inclinations that are characteristic features of a worldly creature. This is the ‘veil’ that surrounds the Atma. At the macro level, these are exhibited by Atma of the creation also. This Atma of creation is the Brahm at the cosmic and macro level, and the virtues mentioned in verse nos. 4-6 are the various qualities that are exhibited by it. Thus, Brahm is the Atma of Vishnu, and what was created by Vishnu was actually done by that cosmic Atma or supreme transcendental Brahm present imperceptibly inside the bosom of Vishnu as the latter’s consciousness and his true identity.

²The ‘five elements’—these are the basic building blocks of life in this creation. They are sky, air, fire, water and earth. The gross body of the creature is made up of these five elements in varying proportions. According to Trishiki Brahmin Upanishad, the ratio of these elements in this creation is the following—earth is one half, and the rest half consists of water, fire, sky and air elements in the ratio of one-eighth each.

According to the Jabal-darshan Upanishad, the body has all these five elements present in it, but some parts have some element in predominance or greater ratio than the other—e.g. the part from the foot up to the knees has the ‘earth’ element in greater ratio; from the knees to the anus has the ‘water’ element in a greater ratio; the part from the anus to the heart has the ‘fire’ element in a predominant ratio; from the heart up to the eyebrows the ‘wind’ element dominates; from the eyebrows right up to the top of the head the ‘sky’ element is the dominant element.

The various Gods thought to be established in these elements and preside over their functions (or who are regarded as their patron Gods) are the following—Brahma the creator in the earth element; Vishnu the sustainer in the water element; Shiva the concluder in the fire element; Ishwar the macrocosmic causal body in the wind or air element; and the all-pervading and all-encompassing supreme truthful and universal entity known as Brahm in the sky element. It would be obvious to even a lay person the significance of these Gods vis-à-vis the different elements. Brahma is the creator, and earth is also the place where all forms of life take birth. Water is called the elixir of life, and hence Vishnu rightly represents it. Fire is famous for its ruthless and destructive nature and Shiva is also reflective of these properties. The Lord Ishwar is like wind because without the air no life is possible anywhere; the wind is literally the lord of life. The sky is fathomless, infinite, pure and incorruptible like the Brahm; it is in the space of the sky that whatever that exists has its presence, for there is nothing outside the sky. So these Gods symbolically represent the primary forces of creation. [Jabal-darshan Upanishad, 8/5-6.]

³The 'five Tanmatras'—these are the five perceptions of sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch that are invariably present in all living creatures. Even trees and worms and insects exhibit them in one form or the other.

⁴The 'three Gunas'—these have been discussed in note of verse no. 3.]

7. When the supreme creator desired/wished to create the cosmos/universe/world, he invoked his third quality called 'Tama', and then under its influence he wished to establish the three subtle Tanmatras (senses of perceptions of the future organs) into the gross forms of the five primary elements called Bhuts (earth, water, fire, air and sky). [In other words, the primary elements which were hitherto neutral and dormant were now infused with the powers to smell, taste, create, destroy, move about, produce sound that can be heard, and spread their influence in the entire creation while occupying all available space. The result was the subtlety of the elements was undermined, and injected with the Tama aspect of Brahm, they became gross in a gradual and progressive manner.]

Each of these elements was then divided into two, and each of these divisions was then again divided into four sub-segments or sub-divisions. He then took one half fraction of each sub-division of these elements and mixed one-eighth fraction of each of the remaining elements with it. This resulted in the possibility of the creation having an infinite variety of entities which constituted the basic ingredients used to mould this stupendously vast, fascinatingly infinite and magnificently myriad creation where no two entities were alike. These variations were so unimaginably countless that literally it was 'apparently endless and infinite, apparently eternal and fathomless'. [That is, these virtues of being endless, infinite, eternal and fathomless were the epithets assigned to the creation because it was so vast and of such a stupendously great variety that it was not possible to measure it or see from where it has its beginning and where it has an end.]

To create a place where this new creation can be placed or rested, he established the fourteen Bhuvans¹ (the mythological abodes of the creation according to Purans). Once this basic foundation was laid, he then needed the creatures that would now inhabit and populate this creation. So he created the creatures in accordance to the environs of the respective Bhuvans. That is, though the types and number of creatures created by him were much more and many millions of times greater than the number of Bhuvans created, he assigned to them these fourteen abodes depending upon their suitability and adaptability. [After all, what was the use of creation of such a formidably vast and varied world and its inexhaustible supply of natural wealth and resources if there was no one to live in it and enjoy them? So the creator felt the need to create a 'living being' in his own image so that he can enjoy this theatre, albeit in the guise of a creature; that is why the creature is regarded as an image of the supreme Lord.] (7).

[Note—¹The *fourteen Bhuvans*--according to Padma Puran, they are the following—

(A) The upper worlds called Urdhava Lokas are seven in number—(i) Bhu, (ii) Bhuvha, (iii) Swaha, (iv) Maha, (v) Janaha, (vi) Tapaha, and (vii) Satyam.

(B) The seven nether worlds called Adha Loka—(i) Atal, (ii) Vital, (iii) Satal, (iv) Rasaatal, (v) Talaatal, (vi) Mahaatal, and (vii) Paataal.

The total number of Lokas is, therefore, fourteen.]

8. As a next step in the process of creation, the creator separated those parts of the five elements that had the 'Raja' quality (which is the second and the medium type of quality among the three basic qualities that are inherently present in the entire creation and which determine its basic nature and character) in predominance. Then he divided them into four equal parts. Out of this, he used three parts to create the five 'Prans'¹ or the vital winds that sustain life inside the body of a living creature. He used the fourth part to create the organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, excretory and genitals) (8).

[Note—¹The 'five Prans'—(1) Pran, the wind element, as breath, that is exhaled as well as inhaled, and which is responsible for infusing and sustaining life in the body; it is considered the chief wind in the whole setup because without life no other wind would be of any significance to the creature; (2) Apaana, the wind that passes down the intestines and is responsible for digestion of the food taken by the creature and its excretion through the anus and urinary organs (kidneys); (3) Saman, the wind that is responsible for equal distribution of nourishment throughout the body, as well as in circulation of blood; (4) Udaana, the wind that helps the body to rise and move about, it also helps the body to expel toxic waste gases in the body through the nostrils and mouth in the form of exhalation and cough; and (5) Vyana, the wind that helps in maintaining equilibrium and pressure within the body, and it also controls the functioning of the other winds.

According to Subala Upanishad, canto 9, verse no.1-14 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, these ten winds have the following functions—(1) Pran—this controls eyes and the faculty of sight (verse 1); (2) Apaana—this controls ears and the faculty of hearing (verse 2); (3) Vyana—this controls nose and the faculty of smell (verse 3); (4) Udaana—this controls the tongue and the faculty of taste (verse 4); (5) Saman—this controls the skin and the faculty of touch (verse 5).

Location of the five chief vital winds, called the 'Panch Prans', in the body—(1) Pran—it is present in the mouth, nose, heart, navel, big toe of the leg; (2) Apaana—it is present in the intestines and anus, lower abdomen, thighs, knees; (3) Saman—it is uniformly present throughout the body; (4) Udaana—it is present in the hands, legs, joints of the body; and (5) Vyana—it is located in the ears, thighs, waist, heels, shoulders, throat.

Besides the Upanishad mentioned above, there are others that elaborately describe the vital winds and their significance, and the chief amongst them are (1) Chandogya Upanishad in its canto 3, sections 13-18, and canto 7, section 15, (2) Jabal Darshan Upanishad, canto 4, verse no.23-24 of the Sam Veda tradition, (3) Maitrayanu Upanishad, canto 2, verse no.7 of the same Veda (which describes the functions of these winds), and (4) Subala Upanishad, canto 9, verse no.1-14 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. These vital winds have also been elucidated upon in sage Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse no.38-39.]

9. In a similar fashion, he divided those parts that had the 'Sata' quality (which is the best form of virtue present in a creature) in predominance into four parts. Out of these, he used three to create the 'Anthakaran' (the inner self) having five dimensions¹ and the last, i.e. the fourth part, to create the organs of perceptions (such as the eye, ear, tongue, nose and skin corresponding to the senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch respectively) (9).

[Note—¹The 'Anthakaran' has five dimensions. These are the following—(a) Praman—knowledge that helps to establish the truth; (b) Viparyaya—ignorance, delusions, illusions such as imagining a snake in a piece of rope; this is erroneous knowledge; (c)

Vikalp—alternatives; that knowledge which is acquired by hearing of it but may not present the correct picture, such as for example a wooden puppet—there seems an apparent difference between plain wood and the puppet, but they are basically the same and defined with the same word ‘wood’; this knowledge is neither is true nor false for to say that the puppet is different from an ordinary piece of wood because of its distinctive shape and value would be as much true as saying that it is plain wood; (d) Nidra—meaning sleep; when a man remains oblivious of any truth just like anything gets hidden in darkness though it is very much there, that man is likened to a man sleeping soundly inspite of the goings on around him and therefore remaining unaware of them; and (e) Smriti—literally meaning memory; it refers to that knowledge which is based on experience and witnessing so that it is etched in memory; such knowledge becomes robust and gets soundly established in mind with the passage of time.

But according to this Upanishad’s canto 2, verse no. 3, the Anthakaran has the following dimensions--Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (the faculty of concentration and memory; knowledge and consciousness), Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance) and their attendant Vrittis (inherent character, traits, habits, inclinations and temperaments of a creature based on these basic components of the subtle body).]

10. From the totality of all the qualities present in creation he created the different Gods who would be the patron deities of the respective five organs of the body created earlier and responsible for their proper functioning. These Gods were symbolically established in the different worlds to look after their respective realms.

[For example, the patron God of sight was Sun and he provided the light to the realm so that the creature can see no matter where it lives. He enabled the faculty of sight to function properly. He symbolically took up residence in the eye of the individual creature as well as in the heaven as Aditya. The eye, in this instance, is the subtle abode of Aditya, while the heaven (sky) is his gross and visible abode. This applies to all the other Gods.]

Therefore, all the Gods took up residence in the various worlds or ‘Brahmands’ on the orders of Vishnu (the Viraat Purush who represented Brahm and was Brahm personified).

[In other words, these Gods are universally present everywhere where there is a living creature. For example, the Sun God is present everywhere where there is a creature who has eyes and who sees. Or, the Sun can be worshipped symbolically in the faculty of sight where he has his permanent residence in a subtle and invisible form even as he is present in the sky in a visible form.]

Upon the instructions of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Viraat Purush (Vishnu) began to take care of the entire gross form of creation. Since this Viraat was empowered with the authority to assign the Gods their respective places and took up the mantle of taking care of the world created by Brahm as Ishwar, he was obviously proud of it. This factor of ‘pride’, called Ahankar, became an integral part of character; it was his attribute. While Viraat (Vishnu) started looking after the gross form of creation, the Hiranyagarbha started taking care of the subtle form this world upon the instructions of the supreme Lord (10).

[Note— Refer Aitereiyo Upanishad of the Rig Veda tradition which describes the genesis of creation in almost similar detail. According to it, the fire element became the patron God of speech, wind/air of smell, the sun of sight, the directions of hearing, the moon of

heart and mind, the element of death and decay as that of the vital wind called Apan which passes down the intestines and out through the anus, and water as the patron deity of semen (Aitereiyo Upanishad, 1/2/4).

According to the philosophy of Vedanta, this Viraat Purush represents the sum total of all the gross bodies of all creatures in the creation, while Hiranyagarbha represents their subtle bodies. In other words, the gross body of the creature consisting of the five organs of perception and five organs of actions are the responsibilities of Vishnu. A man does everything in this gross world with his gross body—great successes and achievements are accomplished by him with this body; he is ‘proud’ of his bodily strength and its beauty and handsomeness. Mere thinking of great successes by the mind and intellect would never materialize if no action is taken by the body to implement the ideas of the mind-intellect. If the body decides so, it can even defy the advice given by the mind-intellect. That is why the gross body is considered haughty and arrogant, i.e. have Ahankar. So there is no wonder that Vishnu, who is this gross body of the world personified, is marked by the attribute of Ahankar or ego and pride.

On the other hand, Hiranyagarbha represents the subtle body—which is the mind and intellect complex. But as is obvious, the subtle body is effective only when the gross body plays along with it as described in the above paragraph. But it must be remembered here that in the process of creation, the Viraat Purush or Vishnu was created from Hiranyagarbha, and not vice-versa. This implies that this Ahankar has its genesis in the subtle body, i.e. in the mind. In other words, if the mind decides so, there would be no Ahankar, and in such a situation the gross body would be endowed with the majesty and noble virtues represented by the mind-intellect complex, i.e. the creature would be humble and pious, kind and considerate, temperate and accommodating, gracious and merciful instead of recklessly bulldozing his way through the world even at the inconvenience of other creatures.]

11. All those Gods who were established in the different worlds could not show any vital signs that could be indicative of life (such as presence of movement in the air/wind element, energy in the fire element, smell and vibrancy in the earth element, ripples and vibrations of the waves in the water element, and the presence of sound waves in the sky element). That is, they remained disempowered, disabled, lifeless, impotent and inert.

Then realising this dilemma that inspite of having everything in place there was still no signs of life, the Supreme Being (Brahm) made efforts to make them conscious and alive. He decided to infuse life into them, or make them conscious. With this thought and decision, he pierced the universe/creation at its top (i.e. at its tip), called the ‘Brahm Randhra’ which means the hair-like slit made or purposely punctured by Brahm himself, and he entered the creation himself through this slit or hole. This point is present in the top of the skull of the creature, and it was this point from which Brahm found its residence in the individual creature. [Refer also to Aitereiyo Upanishad of the Rig Veda tradition, Canto 1, section 3, verse no. 12 which says exactly the same thing.]

With this infusion of consciousness or life marked by the eclectic virtues of wisdom, erudition, sagacity, intelligence, knowledge and skills, they (the Gods representing the various organs as well as the manifested power, authority and potentials of Brahm) became active and exhibited all the signs of vibrant life though they were basically and primarily gross, lifeless, inert, impotent, and incapable of independent existence and activity, and were as good as being worthless and dead until the time Brahm injected the vital spark of intelligent consciousness in them (11).

[Note—It must be noted here that taken in a simple language this verse means that the individual creature represents the entire creation in a miniature form; it is a replica of the cosmos. All the Gods who took up residences in various worlds were symbolically present in his own individual organs which were like those abodes or worlds at the cosmic level. This creature laid lifeless in spite of the presence of the Gods—in other words, these Gods had no independent powers to do anything on their own. This observation itself should make it clear that whatever power and Anankar—pride and ego that Vishnu had of his own abilities came to a naught when the push virtually came to a shove; he could not make the creature alive and inject ‘life’ in; he could not make the creature see, smell, taste, hear or speak anything. So Brahm trounced the sense of pride and haughtiness of all the Gods in one stroke. That they did not realise the import of this is because they were mired by Maya, the deluding powers of Brahm, which virtually keeps the entire creation numbed towards the reality. Why? Because had everyone become self-realised, wise, erudite, sagacious and enlightened, there would be no cause for strife and war, there would be no hatred and animosity, no jealousy and ill-will in this world, there would be no desire to produce and re-produce, there would be no desire to create wealth and newer forms of assets, there would be no material development and no worldly progress, and instead all the creatures would become renunciates and monks—situations that the creator certainly would not approve of because had he wanted such a situation to prevail then he would not have taken the immense trouble to first create then enter this horrible creation himself through the Brahm Randhra as described in the Upanishad. He needn’t have done anything at all.

There is another connotation to this verse. Brahm stands for ‘truth and enlightenment’, an intelligent thinking as opposed to emotional and impulsive behaviour. All living beings that came into existence have ‘conscious life’ in them in as much as they show some or the other sign that are characteristics of life in its myriad forms. But all forms of life cannot be treated as exalted and highly evolved because they lack the divine and eclectic virtues of having wisdom, erudition, sagacity and knowledge that enables them to think intelligently, rationally, logically and analytically; all forms of creatures cannot discriminate between what is spiritually acceptable and what is not, they cannot decide for themselves the path to choose which would help them break free from the cycle of birth and death. This privilege is the exclusive domain of the human being. That is why humans are placed at the top rung of the evolutionary ladder. This is also why it is said that the Viraat Purush had revealed himself in his image of the human body, that the human body is a replica of the Viraat Purush. Now if this is the case, then only those amongst the humans who possess the highest and noblest virtues of wisdom, erudition, enlightenment, intelligence and the ability to discriminate between the bad and the good on the one hand, and the grand virtues of having compassion, love, kindness and mercy, of having total devotion, faith and dedication towards the Truth and following this Truth with whole hearted diligence, of sincerely endeavouring to break free from the shackle of ignorance and delusions that had been trapping their soul for generations after generations on the other hand, can be truthfully and honestly called manifestations of Brahm, or an image of the Viraat Purush. Brahm has revealed himself in all the creatures of this creation, but what sets the humans apart from the rest of the creatures is the possession of the grand and magnificent virtues of Brahm in their best of forms, in the best of their vibrancy, vigour and colour. The human being depicts the powers, potentials and authority of the supreme Lord in all its majestic and glorious form, and that is why the human being has been able to rule over the rest of the creation as its unquestioned master and lord.

This brings us to an interesting conclusion—if the human being is not able to display any of these noble, virtuous and divine qualities that he has inherited from Brahm as his

image then there would be no difference between this human and the other creatures who are lower down in the evolutionary ladder. This is also why amongst the humans the Brahmins are regarded as the closest representatives of Brahm because they are deemed to possess the eclectic and holy virtues of Brahm in the highest ratio as compared to their other brethren. They have all the three Gunas in them, but the ratio of Sata Guna in them is higher than other two Gunas, making them as exalted, revered and honourable as Brahm. It does not imply that others are not images of Brahm, for there is nothing in creation that is not Brahm, but it is just that the degree and proportion of virtuous qualities that are hallmarks of Brahm are present in a greater proportion in Brahmins than other classes in society. All the creatures have their own individual place in creation, but even as all the subjects of a kingdom have their duties and position clearly marked out in order to maintain order and hierarchy, and all of them cannot claim to be called a 'king' and they cannot enjoy the same privileges as enjoyed by the king, all the other classes of the human race as well as the rest of the creatures cannot be treated alike.

Further, all creature have the three basic Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama in varying ratios, thereby establishing their relationship with Brahm, because the off spring acquires the genes of the parent. When all the three Gunas were present in equal proportion in Brahm, he was neutral, detached and did not depict any attributes as all the three Gunas cancelled each other out. The nearest analogy to visualise this is the ordinary sunlight—there are seven colours in it, but they cancel each other in such a way that we cannot discern them in their distinctive individual forms, but what we see is the colourless dazzling light of the sun. This divine and pious form of Brahm is revealed in the renunciate ascetics, hermits, monks, friars, sages and seers, and other enlightened and self-realised persons who are regarded even higher than the Brahmins because they depict the best of virtues of Brahm, and that is also why they are called 'Brahm personified'. They represent Brahm's best form in existence. But with the polarization of Brahm's Gunas, the myriad creation and its inhabitant creatures came into being, each very different from the other and depicting Brahm's various Gunas in varying stages of polarization.]

12. That all-knowing and omniscient Ishwar (the supreme Lord of creation) invoked his own stupendous powers that created illusions and delusions in this creation, called his 'Maya', which allowed him to assume any form that he wished, and in conjunction with it (or joining hands with his own Maya, or allowing himself to become veiled in his own delusions) he entered the body of the individual creature. He was so enamoured with his own creation, and especially when he allowed his Maya to accompany him, that the same cosmic Lord who is beyond comprehension of even the wisest of men and the reach of the holy scriptures, such as the Vedas and the Purans, became engulfed or surrounded by 'Moha' (worldly attractions, infatuations, attachments, endearments, longings, love and affections). With this twin fault—viz. Maya and Moha—that supreme Lord who has no attributes and names became a 'worldly creature'.

[That is, when Maya found out that it's Lord is getting interested in and developing affection for what he has created, it went ahead to fulfill the wishes of its Lord like a faithful and obedient servant would. Maya went literally overboard to please the Lord, and knowing that he might balk and suffer from indecision as to whether or not to allow himself to plunge in the formidable web of creation that he plans to unfold (because Brahm was an enlightened Being, and he would soon realise his failings), Maya showed its sly hand and made him get infatuated and enamoured with the creation to such an extent that the Lord lost awareness of who is was, and consequently became engrossed

in this world like a fish takes to water at the first opportunity. Say, if this can happen to the Ishwar whose Maya did not think twice in casting its evil spell upon its own Lord, how can an ordinary creature can ever expect to be free from its tentacles!]

Therefore, the supreme Ishwar, now manifested as a creature, the Jiva, began to treat himself as a doer of deeds and an enjoyer of or a sufferer from the consequences of those deeds because he became associated with the three types of bodies¹ that he had assumed in his form of a worldly creature.

When he got associated with the body having three divisions (gross, subtle and causal), he naturally lived through all the states through which these bodies pass during their sojourn in this mortal world—such as the waking state, the dreaming state, the deep sleep state, and the Turiya state² of existence. Further, since he had assumed all the characteristics of a creature's body, he assumed that he would die like an ordinary creature. Thus, the immortal Lord became mortal!

[In other words, once Maya and Moha had their upper hands, the Lord of creation was misled to believe that he is an ordinary mortal being who has a mortal body, undergoes the three states of existence so characteristic of the body, that he would die, and that he would enjoy or suffer the results of his deeds.]

As a result he went round and round like the bullock turning the water-wheel or the potter's wheel which goes on endlessly turning; he got trapped in this wheel of a continuous cycle of birth and death (12).

[Note—¹The *three types of bodies* of a creature are the following—the gross body having the various sense organs, the subtle body consisting of the mind and intellect, and the causal body consisting of the Atma surrounded by the bliss sheath.]

Canto 2

1. Sage Paingal once again asked sage Yagyavalkya, 'How does the Ishwar known as Vibho¹, i.e. the supreme transcendental Lord—who is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, who is beyond the purview of comprehension by the mind and intellect, who is most stupendous and magnificent, and who has created, who sustains and ultimately concludes the world—assumes the form of a creature? How does he become an ordinary creature? Please elaborate' (1).

[Note—¹The word 'Vibho' is used to describe the supreme Lord of creation because the word has the following meaning—One who is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, all-pervading, eternal, almighty, majestic, magnanimous Lord of the creation.

'Ishwar' is honoured by epithets which highlight some or the other of his majestic glories. Some of them, inter alia, are the following—Satya (truth), Shiva (auspicious), Sundar (beauty); Satt (eternal), Chitt (consciousness; knowledge), Anand (beatitude and felicity); Akshar (imperishable; the eternal ethereal word), Uttam (the best, the most exalted, the ultimate), Purush (the primary Male Spirit; the supreme Spirit), Parmatma (the supreme Soul of creation), Prakriti (primary Nature), Purshottam (the best Purush; the most exalted holy spirit), Pragyā (conscious, knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment and erudition), besides Vibho as described above.]

2. Sage Yagyavalkya replied, 'Listen attentively and carefully. I shall endeavour to describe to you the details about the origin of the three types of bodies called the gross, the subtle and the causal in which the Lord revealed himself, along with the fundamental nature and form of or the difference between a creature and the Ishwar. This would help you to understand the relationship between the creature or Jiva, and the supreme Lord of that creature known as Ishwar.

The supreme creator or Lord called 'Isha' took fractions of the five primary elements (i.e. sky, air, water, fire and earth) that he had created first to create the gross bodies of the individual creature as well as the gross body of the entire creation¹.

[In other words, the same ingredients were used by him to mould the individual creature's body as well as the rest of the creation. This observation has a great import—although no two creatures are alike, and though the external form and shape and size and colour and contour of any two individual creatures might be different, but they are fundamentally the same. When it is extended to the rest of the creation, then the notion of non-duality, uniformity and universality in creation is easy to understand.]

The 'earth' element was used to create the skull, skin, intestines, bones, flesh and nails. From the 'water' element he created blood, urine, saliva and sweat etc. From the 'fire' element he produced hunger, thirst, heat, infatuations, passions, lust and sexual instincts etc. From the 'wind or air' element he crafted the virtue of 'motion and activity' such as walking, sitting, getting up, going places, breathing, speaking etc. And from the 'sky' element were produced such traits as Kaam (worldly desires, passions, yearnings etc.) and Krodh (anger, vehemence, wrathfulness, short temper etc.).

The gross body so produced from these fundamental primary elements naturally had all the traits that were inherently present as an integral part and defining attributes of these individual elements. Therefore, the body of the creature exhibited all the attributes and characteristics present in the ingredients used to make up its body. The body that the creature assumed further depended upon the cumulative effects of the deeds which the creature had done in the past². Since the body took a birth in as much it had 'come into being' and was 'not eternal and without a birth', it had to pass through various stages of change and development (i.e. evolution) such as childhood, etc., and had to suffer from their accompanying sufferings (2).

[Note—¹By saying that Brahm had created the five basic elements and subtly entered them to empower them with their characteristic qualities it is meant that these elements were bestowed with some fundamental qualities which were deemed most essential and necessary to conceive and implement, then develop, nourish and sustain, and finally close the process of creation as envisioned by Brahm. It was like a delegation of his majestic powers by Brahm, thereby vesting these entities with those powers and necessary authority that were deemed absolutely essential to implement the Lord's ideas of creation.

Thus, the 'earth' was given the virtue of fertility and assigned with the task of providing nourishment and sustenance to the creation as well as to act as a base and foundation for all the forthcoming creation; it was vested with a vast and inexhaustible reservoir of natural resources so as to provide the creation with the necessities of daily life in abundance. The 'water' was vested with the power of digesting and then equally distributing nourishment to all the parts of creation; of providing the vital sap and nectar for fostering life. The 'fire' element obviously was assigned the task of giving required energy, heat and light. The 'air or wind' element provided the breathing and the gases

needed for life; it helped in movement and carrying of information as sound waves. The 'sky' element acted as the great cosmic womb in which the entire creation would be conceived, live and finally find its rest.

To ensure that none of these elements got the better of the other, the cosmic creator ensured a fine balance by neutralizing one with the other. For example, 'fire' had its antidote in water and air (because no matter how fierce the fire is, it can be doused by water and blown away by wind); the 'water' element had its antidote in fire and earth (because the fire can evaporate water and make it vanish, while the water vanishes in the bowl of the earth in a desert); the 'air or wind' had its nemesis in the fire and sky (because even though the air is static it is forced to move when heated, and the strongest of storms vanish in the endless bowls of the sky); the 'earth' element has found its balancing factor in the sky, water and fire elements (because at the end of its tenure the earth would disintegrate and vanish in the sky, the earth is but a tiny dot in the deep dark recesses of the cosmos; at the time of the great dooms-day deluge the earth would be submerged in water, and the fire can scorch earth and render it uninhabitable); and finally the 'sky' also has its antidote in the rest of the four elements (because the sky symbolising space cannot and does not exist in solid rocks or earth, a block of ice or water, in a fierce fire because that fire occupies all space to burn and would chase away every trace of air inside it, and inside specific gases which are forms of air).

Refer also to Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, 1/1-9, 2/1-19, and Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 1.

²This again assumes that the creature was ignorant of its exalted pure form and essential nature as the eternal Atma which resided in its earlier body, that this Atma was neutral and was not at all involved in doing any deed, so there was no question of it getting involved in deeds and then having to assume a body depending upon what it did in its previous life. Herein lay the secret that the Upanishads try to unravel. That creature's Atma had erroneously presumed that the body in which it resided at that time was its identity, it was recognised by the body, it got too enamoured with its deeds and wanted to enjoy them and their results because it found them enticing. This led to its downfall even as the supreme transcendental Brahm had himself been taken for a ride when he became infatuated with the world he had created as has been clearly stated in canto 1, verse nos. 7-12 and explained as notes appended therewith. So if the worldly engrossments did not spare the creator, then how can it spare an ordinary creature? Further, since the individual creature is an image of the creator or Brahm himself, by explaining the concept with the help of the creature, the Upanishadic seer seeks to explain the large picture at the cosmic level.]

3. After that, the supreme creator collected those parts of the individual elements which had the 'Raja Guna' (the second of the three fundamental qualities that are inherently present in the entire creation and determine its characters and specific nature) in predominance. This he divided into four segments, and took three of these to create 'Pran' (the vital winds). These are five in number—viz. Pran, Apaana, Vyan, Udaana and Samana. Similarly, the sub-Prans are called Naaga, Kurma, Krikan, Devdutta and Dhananjaya.

The main or chief Pran (breath or the life infusing vital wind) has its seat in the following sites—heart, lower buttocks (in the Muladhara Chakra which is a subtle energy centre present at the lower end of the body near the anus and genitals), navel (abdomen), throat and other parts of the body.

Thereafter, he used the remaining fourth part to create the various organs of action (mouth, hands, legs, and the excretory and procreative organs). These five organs have as their functions the following—speech (is the function of mouth), receiving (is the function of hands), movement (is the function of legs), excretion (is the function of the excretory organs such as anus and kidneys), and enjoyments of pleasure (is the function of the sexual organs).

Similarly, he collected those parts of the individual elements which had the ‘Sata Guna’ (the first of the three fundamental qualities) in predominance. This he divided into four segments, and took three of these to create ‘Anthakaran’¹ (the inner self; the subtle body). It had the following components—Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (the faculty of concentration, paying attention and memory; knowledge and sub-conscious), Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance) and their attendant Vrittis (inherent character, traits, habits, inclinations and temperaments of a creature based on these basic components of the subtle body).

[That is, the basic nature of a person and the way he would react to a given circumstance, the way he would deal, behave and interact with the world, the way he would interpret things, the way he thinks, the things that would appeal to him and the things he would abhor, etc.—that is, the overall personality of the creature, all depend upon the mental setup tinged with the fundamental character traits that are firmly ingrained in him.]

These components that formed the subtle body had the following characteristic objects that they pursue—Sankalps (making vows promises, having volitions, aspirations and firm determinations etc.—this was the function of the Mana), Nishya (to have predetermined conceptions about anything or situation-- this was the exclusive job of Vrittis), Smaran (to remember and recollect—this was the function of the Chitta), Abhiman (to have pride and arrogance, to be haughty and hypocrite—this was the exceptional domain of Ahankar), and Anusandhaan (research and analysis, quest and enquiry, to determine and arrive at conclusions, to debate and research, to discuss and deduce—this was the function of the Buddhi).

These entities have their seats in the throat, mouth, navel, heart and the mid-point between the two eyebrows.

[It is obvious how it happens. A man uses his mouth to express his mind, his thoughts as well as to show off his ego and pride. Throat and mouth are equally important for the purpose of speaking and gloating over one’s acquisitions and successes. The heart is emotional, and its involvement makes a man passionate about his ideas. The navel is the center from where all the Naadis (nerves) fan out in the body, enabling the creature to remain sensitive, alert and active. The center of the eyebrow is the location of the intellect or Buddhi. This Buddhi stands for rational and intelligent thinking, as opposed to impulsive and sentimental responses of the heart. In other words, all the crucial subtle virtues that were manifestations of the Sata Guna in its various levels of subtlety had their symbolic locations at these five points in the body.]

The Lord used the remaining fourth part of the ‘Sata-Guna’ dominant elements to create the organs of perceptions—such as the ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose. The respective functions are—hearing, touching and feeling, seeing, tasting and smelling.

The following are the chief patron Gods or deities of all these organs—the presiding deities of the various directions, Vayu (the Wind God), Arka (the Water God),

Pracheta (one of the ancient Prajapatis, the care-takers of the creation according to the Purans), Ashwini Kumars (the twin sons of the Sun God and the medicine men of the Gods), Agni (the Fire God), Indra (the king of Gods), Upendra (the junior Gods who help Indra to carry on his functions), Mritu (the death God or Yam), Chandra (the Moon God), Vishnu (the sustainer), the four-headed Lord (Brahma, the creator), and Shiva (the concluder of creation). [It should be noted that how Brahm utilised the third quality of Tama Guna has already been described in Canto 1, verse no. 7 of this Upanishad.] (3).

[Note—¹According to canto 1, verse no. 9 of this Paingal Upanishad, the Anthakaran has five dimensions.]

4. After that, the five sheaths or ‘Koshas’¹ were created. These are the following—‘Annamaye Kosh’ or the food sheath, ‘Pranmaye Kosh’ or the vital wind sheath, ‘Manomaye Kosh’ or the mental sheath, ‘Vigyanmaye Kosh’ or the intellect sheath, and ‘Anandmaye Kosh’ or the bliss sheath. [These sheaths cover the Atma or pure conscious self like various coverings or shrouds wrapping any object.]

The Annamaye Kosh is that which was created by the intake of food, was nourished and developed by food, and at the end it finally disintegrates into the basic ingredients that constitutes food and merges with the earth element from where the food has derived its original ingredients. This forms the gross body of the creature.

The Pranmaye Kosh consists of the five vital winds (Pran, Apaana, Vyan, Udaan, and Samaana) along with the five organs of actions (hands, legs, mouth, excretory and reproductive).

The Manomaye Kosh consists of the mind and the five organs of perceptions (ears, eyes, nose, tongue and skin), while the Vigyanmaye Kosh consists of the combined apparatus made of the intellect and these five organs of perceptions.

A combination of these three sheaths, i.e. Pranmaye Kosh (vital wind sheath), Manomaye Kosh (the mental sheath) and Vigyanmaye Kosh (the intellect sheath) is what is known as the ‘Ling Deha’ of a creature, or the ethereal form of the corporeal body. This is the subtle body of the creature.

The sheath in which the pure conscious self is not aware of the ‘Ling Deha’ is called Anandmaye Kosh. This forms the causal body of the creature (4).

[Note-- ¹These five sheaths are called the ‘Panch Kosha’.

The Atma, which is the truthful identity of the creature, lives in a body consisting of various sheaths, called ‘Koshas’, as mentioned above. Like the crystal, the attributeless, neutral, featureless, untainted and immaculate Atma acquires the various attributes and qualities of these sheaths that surround it, because of the fact that the Atma lives in a body consisting of these sheaths, and it cannot remain indifferent to being effected by their individual characteristics and virtues, whether good or bad. Consequentially, the pristine pure Atma appears to have all these taints and scars that these sheaths possess.

The Atma is the pure-self, the pure consciousness which is a microscopic reflection of the vast macrocosmic Soul of the cosmos called Brahm. The Atma provides life or consciousness to the inert layers of matter consisting of the five elements of air, water, space, fire and earth which crystalise to form the five coverings or sheaths around the pure Atma, and together (the Atma and the five sheaths) they create what we call the ‘living being’, whether plant, animal or humans.

The Food Sheath :- Is the physical body and derives its name because it is nourished by the food eaten by the creature. It consists of five organs of perception (eyes, ears, tongue, nose, skin) and five organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, genitals and anus).

The Vital Air Sheath :- Is the five-fold faculties of perception (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching), excretion (faeces, urine, sperm, sputum, sweat etc.), digestion (stomach, intestine, liver, pancreas, gall bladder, appendix), circulation (blood stream, artery, vein, capillary, heart) and thinking (the power to entertain, absorb and assimilate new information and thought).

The Mental Sheath :- It consists of the equipment which receives external stimuli through the sense organs and links it to the organs of action. Integrated response of body to the stimuli is done through the mind sheath. It is a continuous flow of thoughts. Because the mind is characterised by being in a state of flux, the mind (mental sheath), which is like a clerk, receives information (as stimuli) from the organs of perception and dispatches them to either the organs of action or the intellect when certain situations demand intelligent thinking and discrimination. Therefore, the mental sheath controls the vital air sheath and the food sheath.

The Intellect Sheath :- It acts as a controlling mechanism over the mind; It regulates, filters and modifies the response to the various stimuli. It has the discriminatory power which the mind, left alone to its own self, lacks.

The intellect sheath is the chief of the whole setup—in fact it controls the mind sheath, and through it, the functioning of the creature. It is the task master that directs the reckless horde of school boys running amok hither and thither, as it were. Those boys who obey this teacher become civilised and educated, while the rest of the bunch remains buffoons or ruffians. The intellect can distinguish between the good and the bad, which the mental sheath cannot. The intellect can see beyond the realm of the known while the mind cannot. The intellect sheath is the spring board for all ideas and ideologies. The intellect helps to stabilise and channelise the mind even as the dam controls the river and harnesses its immense energy to produce powerful electricity.

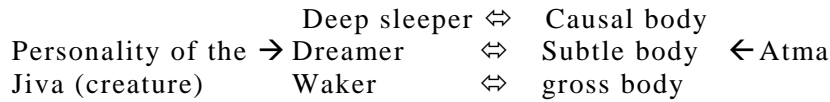
These two sheaths—the mind and the intellect—are called the subtle sheaths or bodies. They have no physical structure in conventional terms like the gross or physical body called the food sheath or Anna Maya Kosh (consisting of the organs of perception and organs of action) as well as the air sheath (called the Pran Maya Kosh) of the creature. This subtle sheath has only functional aspect. The mental and intellect sheaths are like software of a computer vis-à-vis the food and vital sheaths which resemble the hardware paraphernalia of the entire system. The word ‘Pran’ refers broadly to the vibrations of life present in a creature; it pertains to the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life

The Bliss Sheath :- Is the innermost sheath surrounding the Atma/the soul. It consists of ‘inherent tendencies’ or ‘Vasanas’ and ‘Vrittis’ before they are manifested into thoughts or actions. The intellect, mind etc. perform under the guidance and control of the bliss sheath. It is so-called because an individual experiences relative bliss, happiness, joy, contentedness, peace and tranquility when he is associated with it.

In the waking and dream states, a man experiences constant agitation of the mind, but once he reaches the realm of deep sleep state (bliss sheaths), he feels undisturbed, tranquil, peaceful and full of bliss. All agitations cease here. It is a relative experience vis-à-vis the other sheaths. This sheath is also called the ‘causal body’ of the creature.

The five sheaths are all inane, inert and inactive, and constitute of matter. This together forms the personality of the Jiva. He is conscious of all that is happening around him but these 5 sheaths are inert themselves. So, naturally, there must be something distinct and separate from these sheaths that lend the Jiva the so-called life or consciousness. That factor which lends life or consciousness to the Jiva is called Atma,

pure consciousness or the pure self of the creature. It is also the true identity or self of the Jiva.



Sketch depicting the interaction between the Jiva and the Atma.]

5. In the aforesaid manner, the five organs of perceptions (eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin), the five organs of actions (hand, leg, mouth, genital and excretory), the five vital winds (Pran, Apaana, Vyan, Samaana and Udaana), the five principal elements (earth, water, fire, air and sky), the four Anthakarans (see verse no. 3), the four faults consisting of Kaam (worldly passions and lust for self gratification) etc. (the other faults being Krodh or anger, Lobh or greed, and Moha or attractions), Karma (deeds) and Tama (lack of truthful knowledge symbolised by darkness) make up the body called a 'Puryashtak' or a cluster of eight abodes or cities. (5).

[Note--The body of a creature consists of these twenty eight fundamental units which are separate in themselves but are clubbed together to form a combined structure called the body of the creature that harbours the Atma or the pure conscious self of the creature in it. The creature lives in a 'state' or a country consisting of eight symbolic cities; the body of the creature is like a confederation of eight independent city-states that have a mutual understanding of cooperation with a segregation of responsibilities depending upon the competence of a particular unit to handle a job more efficiently. These eight cities are symbolised by the organs of perception + organs of action + vital winds + primary elements + Antahakaran + Kaam + Krodh + Tama = total of 8 cities. The cluster of individual components in each grouping, such as five units that compositely form the organs of action, can be likened to satellite townships or boroughs or shires that form independent administrative units of any large city but are invariably part and parcel of the same city.]

6. On the instructions of the supreme transcendental Lord (Ishwar), the Viraat Purush subtly entered the individual creature and established himself in his Buddhi (intellect; discriminatory and reasoning faculty). With this status, the Viraat acquired the designation or epithet which would henceforth make him known as 'Vishwa'¹.

This 'Vishwa' (i.e. the cosmic Purush or the macrocosmic Lord of creation who represents the vast, all-inclusive body of Brahm at the cosmic level, and who has now taken up residence in the body of the individual creature which forms the basic unit of this mortal, visible world) has many names signifying the special qualities that it possesses. These names are the following--Vigyan-atma (the intelligent, wise, omniscient and enlightened soul), Chidabhas (the one who appears as the pure consciousness), Vishwa (visible world), Byavahaarik (one which interacts with the physical world), Jagrat (one who is awake in this visible world and sees it in actual practice), Sthul Dehabhimani (one who is proud of his gross body, though this is out of ignorance of his true identity which is the subtle and sublime Atma), and Karma-bhu (one who is engrossed in doing deeds on this earth)². (6).

[Note--¹The word 'Vishwa' literally means the world at large; hence when the Viraat Purush metamorphosed into a creature, it was not that he was only limited to a single creature, but all the creatures in this creation had this Viraat element in them. So, 'Vishwa' form of Viraat Purush was the microcosmic profile of the macrocosmic entity that formed the gross body of the entire creation. It must be noted here that the word 'Vishwa' referring to the 'entire world' is actually meant to refer to the world inhabited by living beings of the earth and the Gods they praise. It does not include the entire universe, because the universe has an unimaginable dimension and is much, much vaster than the world in which we are immediately concerned. Therefore, the supreme entity which related to the gross and material world where living beings lived was called Vishwa, whereas the same entity when it related to the cosmos at large was called Viraat, meaning vast, colossus and immeasurable.

²We will note here that all these are the characteristic features of all mortal creatures that live on this earth. All have a mind no matter in which state of development it is, all have life and consciousness, all live in this visible world and interact with it, all are awake when they interact with the world, for otherwise they would be either asleep or dead, all are proud of themselves and their bodies for they love their bodies more than anything else, and all do some or the other kind of deed.]

7. On the instructions of the supreme Lord (Ishwar), the cosmic 'Sutra Atma' (the essential micro fine and microscopic entity that is the cosmic soul of the creation) entered the individual creature's subtle body, and took up residence in its Mana (the subtle mind and heart complex). With this status, the Sutra Atma acquired the designation or epithet of being called 'Tiajas'¹.

This Taijas (i.e. the subtle body of the Atma of the creature) has the following names (which symbolise its chief characteristics)—Taijas (one that has energy and vive, vigour and potentials, strength and vitality, glory and radiance), Pratibhasik (that which reflects the glory, majesty, potentials, authority and magnificence of the principal) and Swakalpit (self created and imaginary)² (7).

[Note--¹The word 'Taijas' refers to the fundamental energy, powers, glory, authority, vigour, strength and potentials that a creature possesses which empowers it to have its importance and relevance in this world. The Taijas is the subtle body where the mind is located. The mind and intellect apparatus is the most important instrument in the body of the creature because it is the mind and intellect that determines the basic thoughts and responses of the creature, which in turn determines the value that the individual has for the society. A stupid man is good for nothing and has no productive use. The mind and intellect literally 'powers and energises' the machine known as the creature, for it is the wisdom and intelligence that a man possesses which make him honourable and praiseworthy; it is the mind that drives the body and enables the creature to perform constructive activity. Even animals live and reproduce, but the man can think intelligently and is therefore considered more evolved in the evolutionary ladder. It is indeed the mind and the intellect that distinguishes an intelligent, thoughtful, learned, wise and skillful man from the blockheads and good-for-nothings. So the word 'Taijas', implying dynamism, glory and majesty, is most apt for the subtle body which houses the mind and intellect of the creature.

²The Mana or the 'mind and intellect' shows these virtues in abundance. Taijas has been described above. A wise and intelligent person's fame and good name is established everywhere. The mind and intellect help a man acquire fame, glory, authority and majesty; they help him to gain honour and praise so much so that while he is alive, people

seek him, and when he dies he is remembered for his prudent words, his erudition, his wisdom and his intelligence. This is his Pratistha.

Similarly, this world is a conception of the mind; it is an imagination of the mind. If the mind so decides, the very existence of the materialistic world would vanish, for the Upanishads have categorically stated in unambiguous terms that the mind is the cause of the 'illusionary and deluding' world. The latter is illusionary because it is like the water in a mirage in a hot desert; everyone knows that the water is not there but still a thirsty man is so much deluded by what he sees that he allows himself to run for it and eventually die due to exhaustion and dehydration. That is why those who are self-realised and Brahm-realised, those who know the secret truth behind the misleading external façade, treat this world as 'non-existent' even though they live a normal life in it and interact with it normally, but internally they remain non-involved and non-interested in it. Hence, the subtle body is given the epithet of 'Swakalpit', i.e. one that creates something out of its own free will.]

8. Under the instructions of the supreme transcendental Lord (Isha), the entity which was characterised by such divine and glorious virtues as being without any attributes, being indescribable, un-manifest and invisible—or was 'Abyakta', assumed for itself the attributes of Maya (i.e. invoked for itself the powers to create delusions and assume any form it wants) and entered the causal body of the individual creature, whereupon it came to be known as 'Pragya'¹.

The other names of this entity which symbolically described some or the other attributes of it are the following—Pragya (something that is aware, wise, enlightened, erudite and sagacious), Avichinna (immutable, indivisible, eternal, unfractionable, one single whole, holistic), Parmarthik (spiritually inclined, divine, holy, pious, sublime and ethereal), and Sushpta-Abhimani (one who is in a blissful state and is proud of his blissfulness)² (8).

[Note—¹'Pragya' literally means something that is aware, knowledgeable, wise, enlightened, expert, skilled, erudite, sagacious and intelligent. The pure consciousness residing in the causal body of the creature has all these attributes; hence the supreme Brahm who lives in the causal body is called by this name of Pragya. In other words, this pure conscious Atma is the micro level counter part of Brahm, and therefore it reflects all the characteristic features possessed by Brahm—with the only difference that it is trapped in the body of the individual creature, whereas Brahm is present in the entire cosmos, uniformly defused throughout it. Why is Brahm trapped as the Atma in the causal body? This is explained in this verse which states that the supreme Lord entered the individual creature and took up residence in its causal body, and he was known as Pragya thereafter. The word 'causal' itself means something that is the cause of anything; it derives its name because of the fact that the Atma resides in its inner chambers, and this Atma is the supreme Brahm personified, and Brahm is the cause of all that exists!]

It should be noted that in Canto 1, verse no. 11, 2nd last stanza, it was said that Brahm entered the body through the Brahm Randhra on the top of the head, whereas in the present verse it is said he entered the causal body. It implies that anything that is the 'cause' of any other thing to happen resides in the causal body. Since the mind (Mana) is the 'cause' of coming into being of the entire world, it is surely the abode of Brahm, and it is also correct to call it the 'causal body of Brahm'.

²The Atma resides in the 'causal body' of the creature. This body at the micro level is called Pragya because the Atma is wise, enlightened and erudite. At the macro level, the

same entity is called Brahm, and the causal body is then known as Ishwar. The words used as epithets for this entity describe its characteristics.]

9. Even a spiritually inclined creature is covered by a veil of ignorance created by Maya (because of reasons cited in verse no. 8 above). This veil is called 'Agyan' or ignorance about the truth. Ironically, this is also one of the attributes of Brahm; it is also one of the myriad forms that Brahm assumes, because everything, including the negative traits and deluding aspects of creation, have their origin in Brahm; it is Brahm in all forms.

From the great sayings, the axioms and maxims of the scriptures called the 'Mahavakyas', such as the one that says 'Tattwamasi' (i.e. that is you), the oneness, universality and uniformity of the immutable and immaculate Brahm is established, but in practice and behavioural world the opposite situation prevails. This dichotomy is due to the interference of Maya and its accompanying Agyan (i.e. delusion and ignorance) (9).

[Note--Though the ultimate truth is one single indivisible reality, we see different aspects of it in this visible world which makes it difficult to believe that the Truth is one, indivisible, immutable and non-dual. For example, it is difficult to reconcile that one's self is the same as the person standing in front. But again this is due to the deluding effects of Maya which has cast a veil of ignorance upon the creature—he forgets that though the exterior may appear to be different but the fundamental entity in the two persons—which is the truthful identity of them—is not their exterior gross bodies nor their subtle bodies, but their Atma residing in their causal bodies. And this Atma is universal and uniform; it is the same everywhere in all the creatures. So, with this erudition one comes to realise that what the Mahavakyas speak is indeed the truth.]

10. In fact, the pure conscious entity that is reflected and experienced in one's inner self is the one that enjoys the three states of existence in which the creature lives in this world. [These three states of existences are the waking state, the dreaming state, and the deep sleep state.]

Though the pure conscious is basically wise and enlightened, but when it comes under the influence of ignorance (Avidya) and delusions (Maya), it begins to think that it is the one for whom the three states of existence are meant; it is the one who is supposed to enjoy or suffer from them. This leads it to get involved and engrossed in the deluding and illusory world to which these three states pertain, thereby getting trapped in their snare. It gets into a situation like a bullock that is yoked to a water wheel and goes round and round endlessly turning the wheel without finding any rest whatsoever. The Atma also remains restless and agitated once it gets trapped in this endless cycle of birth and death due to it getting involved in doing deeds in these three states in which it has falsely allowed itself to get trapped (10).

11. [The five states of existence are being described now in the following verses--]

There are five states of existence of a creature—viz. Jagrat (waking), Swapna (dreaming), Sushupta (deep sleep), Murchha (trance like or comatose), and Maran (death).

The first state called Jagrat or the waking state of existence is that in which the ears and other organs of perceptions (nose, eyes, tongue and skin) are activated and empowered by their respective patron Gods, and they accept the various stimuli from the

external world that are relevant to each one of them (e.g. ears receive the stimuli of sound waves as the sense of hearing; the eyes see the things that are illuminated by light and create images that can be picked up by the eye; the nose picks up the different aroma and odors that stimulate the sense of smell; the tongue similarly carries on the perception of taste; and the skin harbours the sense of touch).

In this state, the creature lives in the material world of sense objects that is gross and which relates to the gross aspects of his body represented by the various sense organs extending from his legs right up to his head as described above.

The creature receives the impulses or inputs from the world through the medium of the various sense organs, and he becomes aware of them because of the mind that is present in the region behind the mid-point of the eyebrows. [This is the exact location of the brain in the body.] He does all physical labour and performs all activities with his body, such as tilling his fields as a farmer if he is not competent to study in a formal school or college, or listening to the scriptures by his ears if he is a student or a wise man. He also receives or enjoys the fruits or rewards of his deeds, and suffers equally from them. These deeds and their cumulative effects, good or bad, are suffered by the creature not only in this life but even in the after-life.

Like a monarch who has gone on a trip outside to the far reaches of his realm and takes a temporary halt to relax before he comes back to his palace for permanent rest, that creature's true self, the Atma, wishes to take some rest when it gets tired of its journey and wants to get back to its inner chamber to find permanent rest in the form of peace and bliss. At that time, the creature withdraws itself (i.e. its sense organs) from remaining active and busy with this world, and goes to sleep instead to take temporary rest and find temporary peace. [That is why when a man is under pain or stress, doctors advise him to sleep.] (11).

[Note—The different state of existence have been beautifully described in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, in 2/1/15-20; 4/3/9-38.]

12. When the organs of perceptions and actions withdraw from their respective activities, when the creature stops to act like a 'customer' of any object or thing 'offered' to it by the external world (in the form of enchanting perceptions that entice the sense organs of perceptions to remain hooked and engrossed in this world, and the enjoyment and pleasure that is derived by doing various deeds by the organs of actions), it is then it is said to be in a state of sleep called 'dreaming'. In this state, when the pure consciousness need not interact with the world through the gross body, the world virtually exists for it in the 'Naadis' (the ducts or channels in the body, such as the veins and nerves) through which it keeps dreaming of the same experiences. These Naadis keep the subtle body alive and active (i.e. though the man is sleeping, his mind forming the subtle body is very much active). The state in which the pure conscious Atma exists during the sleeping state of dreams is called 'Taijas', because it showcases the stupendous powers, potentials and authority of the mind to conjure up a virtual-world which is almost similar to the actual world in which the Atma was living when it was in the waking state of existence. The only difference being that now that world exists only in the mind, and the vital winds that had been activating the various sense organs of the body and keeping them in contact with the external world earlier in the waking state, are now moving through the various Naadis in the body and keep the mind and sub-conscious active.

[That is why, though the man looks apparently 'dead' while asleep because all his external organs are not functioning and he shows no signs of life, his nerves and veins are very much active and kicking, providing the necessary stimuli to the mind to help it to conjure up a 'world of dreams', thereby enabling the Atma to 'live in the world of dreams'. The pure conscious Atma of the creature, it would be observed, sees the world at two levels or planes—one is through the gross body during the waking state, and the other is through the subtle body during the dreaming state. The mind plays a central, active and important role in both the cases. During the waking state, the conscious part of the mind is active, receiving inputs from the external world, analyzing them, ordering the organs of action to respond, and storing data for future referral. During the dreaming state, the mind's sub-conscious part takes over and becomes a dominant factor. Since the mind does not find any rest in both the cases, and it does not let the Atma rest too for it constantly bombards the latter with newer information and inputs, both of them become tired and weary. They do not find true rest, peace, bliss and happiness. For both of them, whether the body is wide awake or is sleeping makes no difference.]

The Atma is surrounded by a veil of Vasanas and Vrittis (i.e. the inherent tendencies and habits that it had inherited from its past and which shape its present passions, desires, inclinations and behaviours). These help the Atma to create its own imaginary world that it is fond of and that is in consonance with its desires and expectations. It then begins to enjoy this world in its dreams much in the same way as it was enjoying the physical world when awake.

[This is possible in the dreaming state and not in the waking state because now the stupendous powers of the mind to imagine and create are free to have their run as there are no encumbrances or hurdles imposed upon it by the physical limitations of the gross body. For example, if the mind feels like flying, it can do so in the dream with the help of the various vital winds moving through the Naadis, while it is not possible to do so with the limitation of the gross body during the waking state.] (12).

13. The state of existence when the intellect is stable and uniform (i.e. when there is no distraction and agitation of any form) is like the 'deep sleep state' of existence when the man does not even dream and has no restlessness even in his dreams! [When he wakes up from this sleep, he is completely rested and refreshed.] Even as a bird that is tired of flying around heads towards its nest to take rest, and having reached there it folds up its wings to retire, the creature too, when it is tired and weary of the restlessness caused during its waking and dreaming states of existence, seeks rest, it retires to the state where there is no restlessness because there is no awareness or knowledge of the existence of the external world, nor the reception of any kind of stimuli that would disturb the peace of the mind and intellect and provoke it. This state is equivalent to being ignorant of any kind of happening that can disturb peace and equilibrium of the man, when he is blissfully at peace with himself. Thus, in this state the creature finds perpetual bliss which is devoid of any interfering annoyance created by the various stimuli either from the physical world of the waking state, or the imaginary world of the dreaming state.

But it must be noted that this state is marked by 'ignorance' of the reality, 'unawareness' of the truth (13).

[Note--This would be clear when we take an example. Suppose a calamity has befallen a man's family while he is away in some distant place. As long as he does not know of this

event, he lives peacefully, but as soon as he becomes aware of it his life becomes miserable. He begins to imagine many things that might actually not have happened, because his mind begins to hallucinate, and this causes him greater distress. In the present verse, during the deep sleep state of consciousness, the mind is completely at rest—for neither does it receive any inputs from the external world as was the case during the waking state, nor any provocation from the world of dreams because the consciousness has withdrawn itself from both these stages. Taken in another way, the Atma no longer needs the help of the mind and intellect when it resides in the deep sleep state of consciousness. It remains oblivious of all happenings in the world around it; it remains truly ignorant of them; it remains innocent like a child. It therefore has no worries or pains. Hence, both the Atma and the mind find peace and rest in this state.]

14. Just like a man trembles and shivers when he is threatened by a stick or baton or club (for the fear of being thrashed), a person who suffers from the disease of faintness (e.g. epilepsy) also shivers and trembles during the attack of the fit. During this fit of faintness, he loses all awareness of his surroundings and the external world as well as even his own body. [He would not know, for instance, where he is fainting, whether there is water or fire nearby, whether any grave danger is approaching him and he should prepare to ward off this danger, etc.]

He lies like an unconscious dead body; or at best like a man who is going through the throes of death and passing through the last stages just before death when his body is in convulsions and distorted, and he is frothing in the mouth and virtually gasping for his breath.

But it must be noted that this state of ‘unconsciousness’ is different from the deep sleep state called Sushupta that is mentioned in verse no. 13. During Sushupta state, there is no trace of agitation that accompanies the fainting disease or even at the last moment of death. On the contrary, there is utter tranquility and peace, utter blissfulness and rest. So, though outwardly the man remains ignorant and unaware of his surroundings and happenings in both these cases, i.e. during the Sushupta state (i.e. the deep sleep state of consciousness) as well as during the attack of the fit of the fainting disease, there is a vast and obvious difference between the two. While the former is a transcendental state of existence, the latter is a diseased state of the gross body [14]

15. There is a state which is beyond these four states of waking, dreaming, deep sleeping and fainting. It is called ‘Maran’ or the actual death. This state creates mortal fear in all those creatures that are born—right from the greatest, the most exalted, the highest and the most majestic, to the humblest and the lowest. When this state is arrived, the gross body to which all the creatures are so endeared and fond of has to be abandoned (15).

16. At that time, i.e. upon death, the creature (represented by his pure self, the Atma) withdraws all its organs of perceptions and actions along with their individual functions, and also all the vital Prans (the vital winds). Then carrying the baggage of Kaam (unfulfilled desires and passions) and Karma (accumulated effects of his deeds done during this life), and accompanied or escorted by Avidya (ignorance or lack of truthful knowledge), that creature transits to another body in another destination.

Being ensnared by remaining engrossed in doing deeds and yearning to enjoy the rewards of those deeds and forced to suffer from their horrific consequences, the creature

is unable or unwilling to abandon that baggage, and carries it to its new destination (in the hope of enjoying it there, or completing its unfinished tasks there). This is the cause of all the creature's sufferings and problems. Being trapped in this way, it never finds peace just like an insect which is trapped in a severe whirlwind (16).

[Note—The transition of the Atma from one body to another has been vividly depicted by citing how a caterpillar moves from one twig to another in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 4/4/3. How the past deeds decide the type of new life is described in 4/3/33 of the same Upanishad.]

17. When as a result of ripening of the fruits of all the good, auspicious, righteous and noble deeds done by a man in his past life and over a long period of time in many previous births he is inspired to seek final emancipation and salvation, when this desire becomes sincere and strong, then he should take the shelter and seek the advice of a wise Guru (moral preceptor and guide). He should serve him long enough to please him so that he throws open the treasury of profound spiritual secrets to him. The spiritual seeker is then able break free from the fetters of ignorance that had been tying him down and is able to acquire liberation and deliverance for his soul. [Refer to Advai Tarak Upanishad, Chapter 11, verse no. 13-18.] (17).

[Note—The fetters of ignorance refer to his unawareness of the fact that his truthful identity was not the body which he had been treating all along as his own 'self', but his Atma which was all along free and disassociated from what his body had been doing. It was his ignorance of the facts that had led to his Atma being falsely implicated as being a doer of any deed, and thereby being forced to get its self trapped in the vortex of doing deeds and suffering from those deeds. This is because when the man thought that 'he' is doing a particular deed it was deemed that his Atma or his soul, which is his pure self and truthful identity, was doing it. This misconception started a chain of events leading to the man getting trapped in this world of deeds and their consequences. But the wise teacher enlightens him about the facts. As a result, the man becomes wisened and enlightened; he realises that if he is not involved in those deeds that are being done by the body in as much as he remains mentally and emotionally aloof, detached and neutral towards them, he would not be accused as being a doer of the deed, and naturally would also not be liable to be punished for them. With this wisdom, he would not allow himself to get involved in the worldly deeds at his mental and intellectual level. With the sense of detachment gaining ground, he remains a mere spectator of all that is happening around him. Even as a spectator is not accused of anything done by the participants of a sport or drama, the man's Atma remains above and immune to all accusations of doing deeds and it does not therefore has to carry the baggage at the time of death.

The enlightened man also realises that the Atma is Brahm personified, and that the body is perishable while the Atma is not. This realisation gives him immense peace and a sense of eternity.]

18. Verily, unrighteous and pervert thoughts create bondage, while righteous and noble thoughts give freedom from them. Hence one should inculcate and harbour only good thoughts.

Imagination, elimination, debate, understanding and censorship help one to arrive at the real form or truthful nature of anything. Therefore, one should always spend one's time in constant search of the truth.

When, by the process of elimination and debate made possible by constant contemplation and deep insight, one is able to find the difference between the Jiva (the living creature), the world (made of illusions) and the supreme transcendental Being (Parmatma or the supreme Soul of creation), one arrives at the conclusion that there is only one essential truth in this creation, and that is the 'living entity' known as pure consciousness. Therefore, a wise and enlightened man is one who strives to remove the deceptive exterior façade which has created distinctions and differences in something that is essentially one, immutable and indivisible. So, by eliminating the dual concept of having two separate entities such as the Jiva and Parmatma on the one hand, and Jiva and the world on the other hand, a wise and enlightened man is able to establish the concept of 'non-duality' in the entire creation. This 'non-dual' entity is known as Brahm [18].

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4 (c) The Subaal Upanishad:--

(Cantos 1-8)

Canto 1

[This Canto, along with Canto 2, describe the genesis of creation. It bears a striking resemblance to Aeiteriyo-panishad and Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 1 amongst others. See note of verse no. 2.]

1. [In a congregation of sages and seers, one of them named Raikwa asked the senior most amongst the assembly, one wise sage named Ghorangiras--] 'What was there before the creation came into being?'

[Sage Ghorongiras replied--] 'Before the beginning, everything was at rest (i.e. there was no activity). There was neither the concept nor notion of any falsehood or of anything which could be distinguished and classified as being either the apparent truth or the real, truthful Truth, or even an admixture of these. (See also canto 2, verse no. 4 and its note)'. [1]

2. [When asked what happened next or what was created first followed by other aspects of creation, the wise sage continued with his explanation and exposition on the process of creation.] 'From this primordial, primary and fundamental state, which preceded the creation and everything else, was produced 'Tama'¹. From this Tam was produced the different 'Bhuts'² and other elements (such as 'Ahankar' or the negative trait of pride and ego, 'Akshar' or the Word, 'Abyakta' or that which was not manifest and had no attributes which could be defined in tangible terms, the 'Tanmatras' or the senses of perception, etc.). These were the basic and primary building blocks for the would-be creation; these were the fundamental aspects and imperceptible subtle elements of creation.

From these Bhuts and other primary elements came into existence the 'Akash' or the Firmament, the cosmic space or the sky element (which would eventually fill the great void present before the creation was born; also ether).

From the sky element emerged the wind element called 'Vayu' (because the ether had vibrations due to friction; these vibrations produced waves, which in turn created what came to be known as wind or air).

From the wind/air was produced the fire element called 'Agni' (due to the frictional energy of the waves present in ether).

From the fire was created the water element called 'Apaha' (because the heat of the fire melted the solidified primordial gel which virtually overflowed and doused that fire as a natural ecological counter balancing factor. [These two steps of wind producing fire and fire producing water are evident during the summer and rainy seasons respectively. When hot wind starts blowing across the plains, we get the feeling that an actual flame of fire is scorching the skin, though there is no visible fire in the hot wind. Similarly, the wind (air) and the heat (fire) are responsible for evaporation of water from the ocean, formation of rain-bearing clouds and their movement. So, the water element in the form of rain is their virtual offspring.]

And finally, from the water was produced the grossest and the heaviest earth element called 'Prithivi'. [As the cosmic gel cooled because of the induction of water element, its heavier ingredients settled down and formed various layers depending upon the density, specific gravity, and such other physical forces of Nature that automatically came into play. That is why earth shows a phenomenal degree of variation in its structural layers. An entire field of science known as geology deals with it.] [2].

[Note—(a) The sequence of events leading to the present universe has been a subject of discussion in a number of Upanishads. Each describes this fundamental process in its own unique way. The variance in the narrations is because each 'seer' who visualised this process in his mind explained it in his own way. Though the basics remain the same, the actual details varied because of the different angles from which the process was viewed or conceived by that particular seer or sage. Consequentially, the aspect which he wished to emphasise found prominence in his version.

Some of the major Upanishads describing the genesis of creation are, inter alia, the following:—(1) The Rig Veda—Aitereyo, Mudgal, Bhavaricho and Chaturvedo Upanishads; (2) The Sam Veda—Chandogya (3/19/1-4, and 6/3/1-6), and Mahopanishad (canto 1); (3) The Shukla Yajur Veda—Brihad Aranyaka (canto 1), Painglo, and Trishiki Brahmin Upanishads; (4) The Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad; and (5) Atharva Veda—Parbrahm Upanishad.

(b) What was present before anything came into being was neither true nor false. That is, it is impossible to assign any definition or any set of attributes, virtues or characteristics to that entity, and demarcate it in specific terms. Everything was in a flux. In other words, it is beyond comprehension and specific description. What appears to be true is actually false, and what appears false on its face is in fact the truth. This is the great paradox which the Vedas have succinctly summed up in the following words—'Neti Neti', or 'not this, not this'. In other words, neither this nor that is the correct thing, for it is impossible to fix the truth with any degree of certainty because it is simply beyond the reach of comprehension.

From this mysterious 'nothingness' was born *Tam/Tama*¹. The word Tam has many connotations—viz. darkness, ignorance, mean qualities, lowliness and anything that is not noble and righteous, not virtues and good. In physical terms it implies the darkness that

prevailed everywhere before the creation came into existence; it was like the dark night after the sun has set over the horizon. In metaphysical terms it refers to the darkness symbolising ignorance and delusions. It was this all encompassing darkness that led the cosmic soul resting peacefully to imagine there are 'Bhuts' or ghosts in the cosmic void around it. This situation is analogous to the case when a person begins to see phantoms and spirits in darkness. The imagining cosmic soul saw the different elements taking various shapes and forms like the ghosts of the night. This allusion has significance; it tells us that if the enlightened cosmic soul could see ghosts and even imagine them to be true, though knowing fully well that such things have no real existence and there are simply creations of a hallucinating mind, there is no wonder in ordinary creatures getting deluded and falling prey to ignorance. The wisdom lies in realising the reality of the situation and waking up from this dream.

There is another way at looking at this thing. The primordial gel was neutral and inactive. To make anything neutral, all its active ingredients cancel each other out. The basic ingredients that determine the natural behaviour and temperament of the living world are the three qualities called the Trigunas. They are 'Sata' or the best virtues in a creature, such as righteousness, nobility of thought and action, spiritual awakensness etc.; 'Raja' or the medium qualities which lead to worldly desires, good passions and hopes, such as the desire to attain fame and fortunes etc.; and 'Tama' or the meanest of the three qualities which are considered evil, sinful and pervert. Now, these had neutralized each other in the sterile, primordial, homogenous cosmic gel. It is out of ignorance that someone assigns a name to this neutral entity. One erroneously says that it was Narayan, or Hiranyagarbh, or Viraat Purush etc. It in fact had no name! Slowly and over time, these three basic elements that decided the nature of creation began to separate from one another and lose their homogeneous, indistinguishable nature. As soon as this began to happen, it is natural that varying shades and hues of forms started taking shape depending upon the ratio and the amount of any one of these qualities present in each individual form that began to crystallize.

This happened in a natural way and according to the basic principles of physics—the heavier element, the Tama, started concentrating at the bottom; the lighter element, the Sata, floated at the top; while the Raja dispersed between the two layers. The partition line was blurred and diffused and not sharp, with one Guna gradually becoming less prominent in the region dominated by the other. This is how the three worlds came into being. The grossest Tama Guna settled at the bottom of the cosmic primordial gel to form the mortal world represented by the word 'Bhu' and the earth. The medium Raja Guna filled the space above it in the form of the sky represented by the word 'Bhuvaha'. And the lightest and most sublime of the three Gunas, the Sata, floated at the top to form the heavens, called 'Swaha'. Finally, the organic matter settled on the layer at the bottom to form the creatures that would roam upon the surface of the earth, represented by the word 'Janaha'. This is how our world came into being. See verse no. 3.

(c) The word *Bhut*² used here has a number of implications. It literally means 'something of the past, gone, that had been; something which is like anything else; consisting of, mixed or joined with; that which is or exists; any living entity (divine, human, animal or of the plant kingdom); the world; a spirit, a ghost, a phantom'. The word also refers to 'the elements' that came into existence before the creation appeared as we know it today. All these meanings fit into the use to which the word is put. The five Bhuts or elements, such as earth, water, fire, wind and space, formed the basic bricks with which the creation was built; they were the primary ingredients which combined in innumerable permutations and combinations to transform themselves into what we see today as the majestic world.

But the word warns us that all this was like a ghost or phantom, because these are also the meanings of this word Bhut. The world that was created was false and imaginary; it had no real existence. All the different names given to its myriad manifestations were similarly false and of no relevance and substance. As we have seen above in this note, everything was created or imagined in the mind of the cosmic soul in the backdrop of 'darkness'. The metaphysical implication is obvious here—the past tense to which the word Bhut alludes indicates that everything is behind us and wisdom lies in looking ahead. It also implies that since each passing moment becomes an imaginary Bhut in the next moment, we cannot change it, but at the same time, we can change the future by realising the truth and reality of the situation, and therefore endeavouring to change the present. That is, though a person had been engulfed by the darkness of ignorance in his past, he should immediately wake up from his sleep of delusions and take remedial measures to 'create' a real and truthful 'life' for himself and others in the present by understanding the great and unequivocal Truth about this creation just like a new creation was created from void of darkness! He must realise that the world that is seen and seems so real and true is indeed false and mirage-like. Hence, it is futile to pursue it blindly.

In other words, though a man was ignorant of the truth and reality till now, but once he has come to know about it by studying the scriptures, he should ensure that he does not fall in the trap of birth and death again. He should be filled with regrets and renunciation; he will be inspired to take the path of Sanyas which culminates in his final liberation and deliverance from the entrapping and deceptive world. It's natural that this Upanishad deals with the concept of Sanyas in detail in its latter half.

The allusion to ghosts and phantoms is apt because it is in darkness that one sees scary figures. The Upanishad advises that a wise man should be wary of this world just like he is wary of the scary spirits of the dark night. When the light of enlightenment dawns on the horizon of a man's intellect and mind just like the sun appearing at dawn, all his delusions and hallucinations arising out of ignorance vanish just like the ghosts and phantoms disappear on the arrival of the sun. This fact is highlighted in canto 7-15 of this Upanishad.]

3. These basic ingredients (of verse no.2) coalesced to mould themselves into the primordial egg-shaped universe. The Purush (the vital spark of life, the mysterious conscious factor subtly and inherently present as an integral aspect and attribute of that jelly that formed the body of the cosmic egg) stayed in it during its incubation period of one year, called the Samwatsar. It then divided its self into two sections or parts. The heavier, grossest part settled at the lower half and it became the earth. The lighter, subtler parts rose to the upper location to become the sky. Between these two, the Purush manifested himself in his divine and magnificent glory.

[This Purush was the Viraat, the macrocosmic gross body that symbolised the sum total of all the bodies that would form in the upcoming creation. The umpteen numbers and varieties of creatures living on the earth represented his legs, while those of the sky symbolised his head. That is why--] This Purush had thousands of heads, eyes, legs and arms [3].

[Note—(1) The word thousands is only a figure of speech to indicate the numerous and uncountable number and variety of creatures that the Purush represents in his person. When the cosmic egg hatched, each tiny fraction of it formed a particular type of creature having a set of distinguishing feature. See also note to verse no. 2

(2) The wise and learned sage is mentally 'seeing' what the scenario might have been that unfolded at the time of creation of the universe. To begin with, there was no activity as symbolised by the cosmic soul resting in the darkness of the pre-creation night. Then when the ripe time came, it showed some subtle activity which resulted in letting loose a chain of reactions. The first indication that something was happening was when the otherwise static and stable homogeneous cosmic fluid began to get separated into lighter and heavier components as described in this verse. If we churn any mixture, say for example milk which looks one homogeneous liquid but consists of so many ingredients, then butter comes to the surface and any residual matters present in the milk would settle at the bottom. This is how sedimentation happens in Nature. This is exactly what happened at that time.]

4. He (Viraat Purush) first created 'death' for all the creatures. The physical form of death had three eyes, three heads and three legs. This form of death personified was called 'Khand Parashu'. [4]

[Note—The form of death with three eyes is called Triyambak; it is another name for Lord Shiva who is one of the Trinity Gods and the one responsible with the task of bringing the creation to a conclusion. He is said to have emerged from Viraat Purush's forehead when the latter deeply meditated in order to initiate the process of creation. According to Canto 2, verse no. 1 of this Upanishad, he emerged from the creased forehead of the angry creator Brahma. Lord Shiva is also known as Pashupati, or the lord of all animal like creatures. Here the word 'animal' refers not to a particular class of living creature belonging to the zoological kingdom but 'animal-like instincts' even in a highly evolved creature such as a man. Since base, crass, lowly and gross behaviour makes a man stoop from his higher stature in the hierarchy of evolution, and instead become an animal that leads symbolically to his downfall, Lord Shiva punishes him for his misdeeds and sins by condemning him to death. Here, death not merely means physical death, but his degradation from the heaven to the lower hell. The word Khand alludes to this downfall, demotion and degradation. A person who is wise and enlightened will not die in the conventional sense because he would have realised that death occurs only of the physical body and not of the soul which is immortal, and therefore only a deluded man is subject to the fear of death.]

5. [The form of Shiva as the patron God of death, or as death personified, as described above was indeed most horrifying and unconventional. So --] Brahma, the creator, was horrified and scared by his own creation when he saw that fearful form of 'death'. At this, he (death personified) merged himself or entered his own creator, thereby becoming one with him and indistinguishable from him. Therefore, whatever the creator created henceforth had the 'death factor' built in it as its integral part which was inseparable from the host.

Then the creator created his seven sons who were conceived in his mind, and were therefore called 'Manas Putra' (literally meaning the son of the mind). [This was because at this primary stage of creation, there was no female in whose womb the creator could have implanted his seeds or sperm. The best way to understand this fantastic occurrence is to observe the way a single cell amoeba recreates itself; it simply splits into two without the need of a partner.] These seven sons had no physical body as they were conceptions of the mind. Hence, when these 'conceptual sons' actually revealed themselves, they became the legendary seven great Prajapatis who would become the

future guardians of the upcoming creation. (See also Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 2 and 4 which is chapter no. 2 of this anthology.) [5].

[Note—A bit of clarification is needed here. The Purush referred above in verse nos. 2 and 3 is the macrocosmic gross body of creation, and is therefore called Viraat meaning vast and colossus. The entire universe represented his body; there was nothing that was beyond the outer reaches of this Viraat. This Purush was produced from Hiranyagarbha which was the macrocosmic subtle body of this universe, while the primary entity which was the macrocosmic soul of the universe was called Brahm or Ishwar, the almighty Lord. This is the Vedantic concept. In the Purans, this Purush is called Vishnu. When the Viraat decided to initiate the process of creation, he did severe Tapa or penance which resulted in sweat drops appearing on his forehead. These transformed themselves into Shiva. The creator Brahma emerged from a divine lotus that sprouted from the navel of Vishnu.

The word Purush also means ‘a male’, and it is an apt word to use for the primary Supreme Being of the creation because he represented the vital spark that ignited the cosmic cauldron. The spark that starts the process of reproduction is the male sperm and not the female ova. Without the male sperm, the ova would be useless and impotent. This is why the ‘spark of life’ in a creature is called its ‘consciousness’ which implies something that is not inert and dead. This vital life infusing conscious factor was present in all things that came into being, and it was called the soul or Atma of the creation. The fluid in which this sperm floated was the primordial cosmic gel. Since the yolk of an egg is yellow, the cosmic embryo was also called Hiranyagarbha, or the yellow entity developing in the cosmic womb. Since the creation is an image of what happened at that time, and the individual creature is an image of that Viraat Purush, it is natural that the egg and the embryo of the creature would also resemble their parents.

The proof that Hiranyagarbha had the vital spark of life invested in it is the fact that anything which is not ‘alive’ cannot show any sign of activity, what to speak of such an important activity as dividing into two as narrated in the foregoing verses.

The seven sons of the creator were called Prajapati because they were assigned the task of taking care of the subjects of their father Brahma, the manifested form of the Viraat Purush.]

6. From this Brahma, the creator, emerged the rest of the creation as follows:---From his mouth came into being the Brahmins; from his arms were created the Kshatriyas; from his thighs evolved the Vaishyas; and from his legs were created the Shudras. From his Mana (mind) came into being the Moon; from his eyes evolved the Sun; from the ears arose the external wind (present in the entire cosmos) as well as the Pran (the vital wind in the form of breath that sustains life, as also the other vital winds that control other functions of the body of a creature); and finally from his heart sprouted the rest of creation [6].

[Note—(1) These *four classes* of the human race were created from the single father, the Viraat or Brahma. Their origins are indicative of the different jobs that they were assigned so as to enable the creator perform the task of governance efficiently just like a king assigns separate jobs to his different ministers. But it must be clearly understood here that each class of the human race was like a part of the body of the Supreme Being, and even as a man feels disfigured and handicapped and equal intensity of pain if his leg is cut off from the rest of his body as he feels when his arm or head is severed, the Lord feels betrayed and hurt when even one of his sons is subjected to humiliation and pain.

All are equal in his eyes. The four classes had specific jobs cut out for them so that the society could function smoothly.

The *Mouth* is used to advice and teach; hence the primary job of the Brahmins was to act as moral guide to their brethren. The four Vedas, which are repository of all knowledge that exists, were also created from the mouth of Brahma; hence these Brahmins were considered most wise and learned because they represented the knowledge and wisdom contained in the Vedas. The arms are metaphors for strength and powers; they are used to protect and help others. Hence, the Kshatriyas were those sons of Brahma who would do the needed by affording protection to their other brethren. In order to feed his creation, Brahma had to toil and labour; merely teaching and protecting would not suffice without some one to take care of the other necessities of life, such as production and distribution of food and generation of wealth to provide basic comforts. So he created the Vaishyas to pick up the mantle of mundane affairs of life on his behalf. But there must be someone who would do the daily chores and the service part, such as tilling the fields, doing the harvesting, washing and cleaning, and all other such odd jobs. This was assigned to the Shudras.

None of these classes were meant to be inferior or superior to one another; they were all parts of the body of the same Brahma. In fact, the leg bears the burden of the body; just imagine what would have happened if Brahma had not created anyone from his legs? How would the Brahmin walk, how would the Kshatriya fight, and how would the Vaishya do his commercial activities if he could not walk? Similar arguments can be applied to other classes. See also Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 1/4/11-13, and Aitereyo-panishad, 1/1/4.

(2) The *moon* stands for emotions and sentiments of a creature, hence its origin in the Mana which is the epicenter of all emotive thoughts. The sun shows light to the world, hence its symbolic origin in the eye of the creator. The ears hear sound from all the directions, and sound has its origin in waves which travel in space through the medium of the ether, because sound cannot be either heard or can reach any place without any medium. This medium was called the wind, and since the ears make the presence of sound evident, the wind or air has its origin in the ears of Brahma. These ears are physically shaped like a radar or satellite dish antenna because they not only transmit sound waves but also receive them. They are like a 2-way radio receiver. And of course, the world has any relevance and importance if only the heart loves it and wishes to be enamoured with it. Once the heart starts to loathe it, or becomes dispassionate towards it, the world becomes irrelevant; therefore the world becomes non-existent as far as the creature is concerned.]

Canto 2

1. From the creator's Apan wind (the vital wind which is inhaled and moves down in the body, thereby helping in digestion and excretory functions) was created the 'Nishad' community (the boatmen and elephant tamers), the 'Yakshas' (a type of demi-God who guards the treasure of the Gods), the 'Rakshas' (the ones with evil, pervert, sinful and demonic tendencies), and the 'Gandharvas' (celestial musicians; those junior Gods who were lower in the hierarchy of heavenly Gods).

From the bones of the creator were formed the mountains; from his body hairs came into being the members of the botanical kingdom, the various plants and

vegetations, including the medicinal herbs; and from his forehead creased with anger evolved the God of wrath, or 'Rudra' [1].

[Note—(1) The *Nishad* community was considered lower than the Shudras. In practical terms this refers to the fact that these people stayed outside the villages and cities, and had little interaction with those people who were regarded as more educated and cultured. The fishermen and others who took care of animals, such as horses, elephants etc. also belonged to this group.

The *Yaksha* was the guard of the God's treasury; here they were assigned the job of protecting the assets that would be generated by the other classes in social hierarchy. The society had all types of people; some of them were wicked and evil. They were the *Rakshas*.

And the *Gandharva* was a soul who had aspired to be as exalted as a God but somewhere went astray from his path and became a junior God. All these designations imply that the creation created by the creator had all shades of creatures in it, and all of them were his sons because all were formed from a part of his body.

(2) Obviously Brahma got annoyed when his sons started bickering among themselves. So he got angry, and his forehead creased in annoyance. This metamorphosed into Rudra. The word Rudra means anger, wrath, vehemence etc. This Rudra was the God of tempest and destruction. He is also identified with Kaal or time and death, because Rudra sparked annihilation when the opportune time for destruction came. The terrible shaft of Rudra brings death and disease to cattle and man, just like plague/pestilence mentioned in the Holy Bible.]

2. That majestic, supreme, almighty One with stupendous glories and immeasurable potentials is an embodiment, a personification of the entire creation made up of the various elements called Bhuts. [See note to verse no. 2] The 'breath' of that Supreme Being consists of, and has manifested itself as, the eternal body of knowledge called the Vedas and their various branches and their offshoots. These Vedas are the Rig, Yajur, Sam and Atharva. Their branches and offshoots are represented by their teaching and principles being interpreted in different ways, leading to various schools of philosophies and doctrines, as well as the different rituals that accompany the performance of religious sacrifices prescribed by them. The study of the Vedas led to the necessity for grammar and the development of etymology of their words as well as the patterns of their poetical composition, called the Chandas, for their systematic study. The Vedas were a huge encyclopedic repository of knowledge, but to put that profound knowledge contained in them to good use created the need to unravel their secrets by studying them in a systematic manner (much like we study any science or learn any art in our modern schools or colleges) by segregating the composite body of knowledge into separate subjects and separate schools, such as astrology and astronomy based on the mathematical formulas encrypted in them, the art and science of jurisprudence, the different philosophical doctrines and their import, and consequentially do more research on them and find out the greater truths enshrined in the magnificent words that were pronounced by Brahma for the good and welfare of his own creation¹.

The study and research of the subject matter of the Vedas led to the determination of specific and irrevocable truths, called 'Mimansa'; the evolution of various religious scriptures, called the 'Dharma Shastras', based on these profound truths; detailed narrations and expositions on their principles and philosophies as well as elucidation and

discussions of their teachings, their fundamental tenets, their maxims and axioms, called 'Vyakhyan', so that others could understand and follow them. This obviously necessitated the need for having sub-texts which would supplement and compliment the main texts by way of explanatory notes and examples, and set reference models for every sphere of life. Such sub-texts were called 'Up-vyakhyan'.

The above form that the breath of the creator took was of 'intellectual' nature because it pertained to knowledge and its application. But that knowledge would be of any utility only if the creature he produced had 'life'. So the breath of Brahma became the 'breath of life' of all the living creation.

[That is why we say 'a man is alive as long as he continues to breathe'. The faculty of speech also depends upon the breath, because no dead man can speak, and air, which is the wind passing in and out of the body as breath, is the element that enables a man to speak by causing the vocal chords to vibrate in the throat. A person learns anything when he hears about it; a child who has never gone to a formal school also picks up basic knowledge when it hears others speak on any subject, which is how a baby learns to speak its mother tongue even without formal schooling. No subject can be 'taught' without speaking. A man's erudition and wisdom is of no worth if he cannot 'advise and guide' others, but for that he needs to 'speak'. So the profound importance of 'breath' cannot be ignored.] [2].

[Note—¹Like any father, the Creator wished to ensure that his progeny is well provided for; they must be given proper guidance and knowledge about their surroundings and must be provided with necessary tools so that they can take care of themselves. That is why he created the Vedas; these texts were meant as an encyclopedia that the creatures of Brahma's creation could refer to as and when they needed, just like we study and acquire necessary arts, skills and knowledge to enable us to stand on our two feet when we grow up and stop depending upon our worldly father for our day to day needs and guidance. After a stage, we leave our colleges and institutes and enter the theatre of life fully prepared to take care of ourselves based on these skills we have learnt in our schools and colleges. So was the case with Brahma and his creation. Knowledge is empowerment; it is a basic requirement if we wish to rise above the level of an ignorant animal. It is knowledge that distinguishes a learned man from a stupid fool. Everything about an educated man would be different from an idiot. No father would like his son to lead a worthless life, so how can the cosmic father have ever neglected this factor while on the job of creation. It is another matter that his sons became Frankenstein monsters in due course!]

3. That supreme entity from which everything else evolved is radiant, splendorous and glorious like pure gold. It is self-illuminated with a brilliant divine light in which that Atma (the macrocosmic consciousness of the creation) is subtly present and forms its integral and inseparable part. Besides the Atma, the rest of the world (both the subtle as well as the gross aspects) is also inherently and intrinsically present in the primordial golden cosmic embryo.

That Hiranyagarbha (primordial golden cosmic embryo) divided itself into two—from one part came into being the 'male', and from the other, the 'female'. Becoming the ancestor of all individual forms of life in this creation, he (the macrocosmic male aspect of creation, the Viraat) created all imaginable genera of life forms. Or in other words, with God-like attributes he created the Gods, with attributes associated with sages, seers

and saints he created people who would be sages, seers and saints. Similarly, the Yakshas, the Demons and the Gandharvas were also created by him. Next he created the creatures in the lower rung of intellectual development, such as the animals, both the domesticated as well as the wild ones. In this category, some animals became cows, bulls, horses, mares and stallions, while others became donkeys etc.

Some of creatures became ‘mothers’ (i.e. females) while others became ‘fathers’ (i.e. males) of the world (i.e. the mortal creation on earth). [This was an ingenious way in which the supreme creator ensured that the process set in motion by him is carried forward unhindered when these couples would procreate themselves without the intervention of the creator any more. Their progeny would populate the entire world.] [3]

[Note—This verse should be compared with verse no.3 of canto 1. There the two parts of the primordial egg formed the earth and the sky; here they metamorphose into a male and a female. In modern terms we can say that verse no.3 of canto 1 relates to the science of physics and geography, while verse 3 here concerns zoology and botany.]

4. [This verse describes the doomsday scenario, which has an uncanny resemblance to the description in the Revelation of the Holy Bible.]

Finally at the time of conclusion, the Supreme Being burns everything and reduces them to ashes (or annihilates completely, without leaving any trace of any form in which the earlier creation existed) in his manifestation or form known as ‘Vaishwanar’. [This Vaishwanar is the universal fire element which is present everywhere in a latent form, only to reveal itself when required.]

The earth submerges in the water (of the heaving ocean), the water in the Tej (the energy and heat that is produced at that time eats up the water, or makes the water boil and evaporate), the Tej in the wind (as the heat dissipates and fire is extinguished by the ferocious storm that blows at that time), the wind in the sky (because the wind or air blows in the vast reaches of the sky and sweeps across it, carrying with it the remnants and shreds of creation into the deep bowls of the cosmos). [This is the narration of what is expected at the time of conclusion of the world. This is the end of the physical world at large. Now we shall see what happens to the individual creature at that time.]

The sky collapses in the gross organs of the body (as the creature is unable to breathe fresh cool air because of the reasons explained above, and suffocates to unconsciousness), these organs into their respective sense perceptions (such as for example, the physical organ of the eye ceases to function and that part of the brain that deals with the sense of sight becomes dysfunctional, as a result that though the eye is open, the creature is unable to see; this can be extended to other organs), these perceptions dissolve into the basic elements called Bhuts (which are sky, wind, fire, water and earth), these Bhuts merge into their primary source from where they had emerged at the time of creation, which was Ahankar (literally meaning pride and ego, because it was Ahankar that one can do such and such thing, and then control it and rule over it, and then determine not only one’s own future but even the destiny of others that led to the chain reaction that resulted in the creation of spider’s web known as the world), the Ahankar element collapses into the ‘Mahat’ (the supreme, subtle and sublime almighty entity that is the ultimate ‘Authority’ that governs all that exists). It was the Ahankar of this ‘Authority’ that it can create such a formidably fantastic and magnificent creation single handedly that led to this magical drama to unfold in the first place.

[When this 'authority' realised what a colossus Frankenstein monster it had unleashed, it regretted its decision and decided to call it quits, which resulted in the conclusion.]

This Mahat has some attributes, such as having Ahankar, but it then dissolves into its primary source which has no attributes, and is therefore called 'Abyakta' or the one which cannot be defined, which cannot be seen or perceived or comprehended, which is not manifested or revealed in any way whatsoever.

The Abyakta then dissolves or merges in its own source, the 'Akshar' (literally meaning the word). The latter then vanishes into 'Tama', or goes into oblivion of the eternal darkness present before anything came into existence.

Finally, this Tam dissolves into and becomes one with the supreme transcendental Lord called 'Param Dev'.

When this comes to pass, nothing remains—there is neither truth nor falsehood, or an admixture of the two. (See also verse no. 1 of canto 1.) This is the discipline followed which leads one to the path of Nirvan, or the ultimate emancipation and salvation*. This is also the path determined by the Vedas; this is their teaching and tenet. [4].

[Note—(1) The process followed here is the reverse of what happened at the time of when the creation unfolded. After the individual creature lost his individuality, it disintegrates into its primary elements. This is at the microcosmic plane of the individual creature. Then we come to the next plane of macrocosm; here the same process occurs, albeit on a larger canvas. All the various Gods represent Ahankar aspect of creation because they think that they are very powerful and have the right of way in the creation. These Gods had taken dwelling in the various organs of the body of a creature when the creation was born. Now they realise their impotency, their impertinence and irrelevance, and virtually 'die of shame' at their ignorance-induced haughtiness that had made them think that they were superior to others in this creation. When these Gods collapse and vanish in the same way that the individual creature had been through earlier at the micro plane, then it is said that the Ahankar has collapsed into the Mahat, or that the microcosm has collapsed in the macrosom. This is the Viraat. Next, this Viraat withdraws itself into that entity that is totally devoid of any attributes, the Abyakta. In other words, the manifested form of Vishnu vanishes into his un-manifested form. The grosser macrocosm vanishes into the subtler macrocosm. The scriptures aver that at the beginning there was the 'word'. This is the Akshar referred above in the foregoing verse. This word was the eternal cosmic sound arising out of vibrations appearing in the cosmic ether when the first signs of some activity in the beginning of creation appeared. Now in the present case when everything is cooling down, this vibration also gradually subsides, and there is absolutely no activity or movement causing any vibration or sound. This is the allusion when it is said that the Akshar vanishes into Tam---all sound falls silent; there is complete stillness of death and the calmness of a dark and still night.

At this stage we find that we have arrived at the point from where the whole enterprise of creation had taken off. That entity which was present before this all started is the entity that remains after all this concludes. And it is the supreme transcendental Brahm, referred to here as Param Dav, or the ultimate Lord. Refer Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 3, verse nos. 8-16.

(2) Verse no.1 of canto 1 describes the situation at the beginning, while verse no. 4 of canto 2 narrates the end. The intervening verses describe what lies in between. So now the circle becomes complete.

(3) The process described at the time of death has a parallel in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 1/5/21 and 3/2/10-13 which is chapter no. 2 of this anthology.

(4) The concept of Vaishwarnar Agni (the all pervading and ubiquitous but latent fire element) is described in detail in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 5/9/1 and its note (chapter no.2).

(5) At the level of an individual creature, when the 'death pangs' start, the fire of life present in it begins to die out and the body progressively becomes numb and cold. All its energy and vitality begin to ebb and get transferred to the wind element present in its body as Apaana, Vyan, Udaan, Samaan and Pran. These rise and escape from the body as the creature finally dies when the breath, which is nothing else but the Pran wind, leaves the body. Once the Pran makes its exit from the body, it being the wind element, it immediately disperses in the surrounding space or the sky element and becomes one with it. So now the microcosm has merged with the macrocosm.

At the level of the cosmos, science has established how the world would finally come to an end. In short, all that would remain would be a Black Hole from where even light cannot escape. This alludes to the situation when nothing exists, neither the truth nor the untruth. In the context of this verse, see canto 11, verse no.1 and canto 14, verse no.1. Other major references are (a) Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 3/2/11-13, and 6/2/1-16; (b) Chandogya Upanishad, 5/3/1—5/10/10.

(6) *This verse says that the knowledge contained in this Upanishad leads to liberation and deliverance of the man. Let us examine how and why is he inspired by this knowledge. First, when a wise man observes that even the creation of the cosmic creator Brahma—who is most competent, proficient, innovative, resourceful, mighty, potent and powerful, who is endowed with such stupendous mystical authority that he could do whatever he wanted by his merely wishing for it, who went on and on with his creation creating ever newer varieties and forms of creatures, both animate as well as inanimate, of all shades and hues, belonging to the animal, the plant and heavenly kingdoms, as well as the innumerable number of Gods in his enthusiasm, and also because he wasn't satisfied with what he had created a moment earlier—will come to an end one day, and even that all-powerful Brahma would not be able to save his own creation from decay and disintegration, then what does a humble man—who is like a speck of sand on the beach of the cosmic creation—count; where does he stand? So what is the purpose of causing so much mental misery for what is not possible?

Second, he realises that when Brahma could not be satisfied with either his sons or the rest of creation that they would be able to take care of themselves, as he had to create the Vedas for them which would act as reference encyclopedia for their use, but even these Vedas could not provide them emancipation and salvation in the face of ignorance and delusions which came in their truthful interpretations---say then, how can the humble and inconsequential man ensure that all will be fine with the world for which he is so concerned? Or for that matter, how can he expect these scriptures to provide him with liberation and deliverance if he does not properly understand and implement their advice and guidance.

Third, he learns how the 'Ahankar' factor was the ignition key that propelled even the wise Brahma to think that 'he' is capable of creating something from nothing, and then actually going ahead with this job with this erroneous belief that 'he has created successfully'. Then he proceeded to 'provide for its maintenance, development, progress and general well being', again thinking that 'he is doing it'. But when the time came for conclusion, this Brahma could do nothing to stop it; he could not prevent the disintegration and dissolution of the creation. So a wise man realises that Ahankar is at the root cause for all his self-generated traps in the form of the notion that 'I can do this and that', and then falling into his own snare.

Fourth, the man sees that it was then that Brahma understood that it was some authority much superior and much more powerful than him who was literally remote controlling the whole process, every step of it every moment, and that even Brahma had a father called the Viraat, and the latter also had a father called Hiranyagarbha, who in turn had Ishwar as his father. This Ishwar is the supreme Lord of creation known as Brahm, and not Brahma. This Ishwar is the supreme transcendental cosmic Truth and the absolute Reality in creation. This Brahm has transformed himself as the Atma to make himself readily accessible to each and single creature of his creation, as the Atma resides in the bosom of everyone. This enlightenment makes the man realise that he is indeed Brahm in the form of his pure conscious Atma, and that what he sees around him in this world is exactly similar to what the Brahma, the creator of the physical gross world saw when he thought that he is the creator. And quite similarly, the man has no control over it even as Brahma had no control over his own creation.

All this pondering and thinking sets the man on the twin paths of inquiring what lies behind the false façade of this world and acquiring the truthful knowledge of the reality. He stops pursuing the world because he has come to terms with the fact of its falsehood and the reality that it will end one day nevertheless. This is renunciation and dispassion. Then he begins his search for the 'truthful truth' which can give him real peace and happiness, because that is the goal for which he had been madly engrossed in the world in the first place, seeking peace and happiness in it. This profound awakening is the 'realisation and enlightenment' of the creature. Naturally therefore, he becomes placid and contemplative; all his agitations calm down and he devolves into his 'true self' which is the pure consciousness known as the Atma. This Atma is a fount of eternal beatitude and felicity. This realisation of the truth is tantamount to breaking free from the bondages of slavery under ignorance and delusions!]

Canto 3

[This canto describes the salient characteristics of the solemn Atma.]

1. Before the time the first version of the universe came into existence, there was only 'Asat' (i.e. that which was not the truth). That is, it existed in a form that was not visible, non-verifiable, unrecognisable, non-apparent and imperceptible. And therefore it was deemed to be false and non-existent.

Since the world/universe was non-existent at that point of time, the Atma, which is eternal, imperishable and infinite, is not born out of it (because nothing can be born from something that does not exist, and the Atma was there even though the world wasn't there). Therefore, the Atma does not acquire or derive the stupendous authority, glories, majesties, powers and potentials that it inherently and undisputedly possesses because of this world.

[That is, the Atma and the world are separate entities. The former has no beginning as it is eternal and imperishable, while the world has a definite beginning and an end. The Atma predates the world; it does not depend upon the world.]

The Atma (soul, pure consciousness) cannot be defined by conventional means by using words. It cannot be touched or felt (since it has no gross body like an idol or even subtle body like the wind respectively). It has no shape, form or contour (because it is attributeless and formless). It is neutral, being an entity marked by equanimity and indifference towards everything. It has no smell that can be detected (i.e. since it is pure, unpolluted, un-adulterated, sublime, eternal and imperishable, no smell or odour, either

pleasant or foul, emanates from it). It is free from decay and destruction because it is imperishable and eternal; it is infinite and without a beginning or an end. It needs not to develop or grow any further because it is already grand, majestic and stupendous. It is self contained and satisfied. It is without any birth or beginning (and therefore has no parent or lineage).

Those who have a steady and unwavering intellect having a firm conviction and faith about the glorious and magnificent divine virtues of the Atma and its distinguished existence separate from the rest of the creation, do not have the misfortune of having to suffer from any sorrows, pains, worries, grief, anguish and lamentations of any kind. They never feel distressed, mournful, dismayed, melancholic and disappointed in any circumstance¹. [1].

[Note—¹A person who is realised about the solemnity and sublimity of the ‘sacred self’ does not suffer because he is not affected by any of the worldly emotions and problems, because for him all these are transient and false like the world itself. Such a person does not yearn for comforts and pleasures because they are also transitory and illusionary. He is not afraid of death because the Atma is eternal and it never dies, and he has realised that he is the Atma and not the body. He is not bothered of any bodily diseases because the body does not belong to him and it is perishable anyway. He is not worried about his sons and family because he is filled with renunciation and detachment. He is contented because he has no desires left un-fulfilled. He is not worried about acquiring any more knowledge because all that is to be known is already known to him. It must be remembered here that the Upanishads talk about wholesomeness and completeness of any thing. Therefore, the realisation and enlightenment should be complete and wholesome; it should be a holistic approach, and not piecemeal and fractured.]

2. This Atma does not need a Pran (the life infusing and life sustaining vital wind; the breath and other forms of winds present in the body) to remain conscious and alive because it is consciousness itself. It has no mouth, no ears, no speech or voice, no Mana (no emotive thoughts and sentimental behaviours), no Tej (i.e. it has no apparent boisterous spurt of energy and enthusiasm; it has no apparent and discernable signs of life as indicated by the presence of warmth in the body which is an indication of life and vitality), no eyes, no names or epithets, no inheritance, lineage or parentage, no head, no limb, no affections, infatuations or attractions towards or with anything or anybody, no faults, taints, blemishes or shortcomings of any kind. The Atma has no one who can do any good to it or help it in any way (because it does not need anyone for it in the first place, and it is sufficiently self-contained as well as self sustained enough to necessitate it). It is boundless and limitless, it is measureless and without any parameters.

It is profound, majestic and grand with a huge dimension as well as inconsequential, microscopic and diminutive in form. It is gross, dense and heavy as well as light and subtle. It transcends everything and all definitions so much so that it cannot be comprehended and definitively described by the mind-intellect complex.

It is free from any veil or covering that can hide it or conceal its glorious and radiant existence. It cannot be subjected to any discussion, debates and application of logic, rationale and theories. It needs no light to illuminate it because it is self-illuminated. Therefore, it cannot be shown by any external light (because light can show or highlight anything that is in darkness, but how light can show the sun, for example. Atma is not dark, but it is as splendid as the sun).

It is not dogmatic and narrow minded; it is not a fanatic or a hypocrite. It is devoid of any limitations caused by such arbitrary and hypothetical conceptions as the notions of having an inside and an outside. It is universal, uniform, all pervading and omnipresent; it is all encompassing and nothing is beyond it.

It neither eats anything nor is eaten by anything.

[The word eating here has two connotations—harming someone physically as when meat is eaten, and subjugating anyone and usurping his freedom and property. That is, the Atma is very benevolent and merciful as it does not wish to hurt anyone or anything by harming it or tormenting it in any way. At the same time, it cannot be devoured, annihilated, tormented, extinguished, trampled upon, sidelined, eclipsed or subjugated by anyone.] [2].

3. [This verse describes the path to be followed for realisation of the Atma.]

There is a 6-fold path which helps in the realisation of the Atma. It is—(1) truthfulness (of mind, intellect and heart, of deeds and actions, of speech and all other activities); (2) charity (magnanimity and compassion, giving of donations and alms, providing succour and solace); (3) Tapa (sufferance and enduring of hardships, observing austerity and penance); (4) fasting (i.e. observing self restraint of the organs of taste and abstaining from indulgence in food); (5) Bramacharya (celibacy; abstinence and continence; self restraint of the sense organs); and (6) unwavering and sincere renunciation (as well as total and steady dispassion, detachment, indifference to the mundane and the worldly).

Out of these, the three virtues which should always be kept in sight at all times, are---Dam (self restraint of the sense organs, including the mind and heart), Daan (charity, giving of alms and donations), Daya (showing mercy and compassion to the unfortunate ones). [Refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 1.]

For a person who follows these tenets, the Pran does not abandon or betray him (i.e. it does not get wayward and lead the creature to his downfall; it does not betray the superior Lord called Atma residing in the bosom of the creature by doing anything that would put the Atma to shame by inducing or propelling the creature to get involved in anything that is not behooving for the Atma). Instead, it merges and dissolves in the Atma and becomes one with it. Since the Atma is a microcosmic image of the supreme macrocosmic transcendental authority of the creation called Brahm, the Pran also becomes one with Brahm. [That is, a person who follows these cardinal principles attains the ultimate liberation that every wise and enlightened person aspires to obtain, and it is to attain the final resting place in the Brahm from where there is no return. See also canto 7, verse no.1.] [3]

Canto 4

1. This fundamental principle called the Atma is comfortably ensconced and hidden in the center of the red coloured mass of muscles and tissues known as the heart. It resembles a white lotus flower or a white lily which is fully developed.

The heart has ten apertures or holes in which the Pran (the life giving and sustaining vital spark of consciousness) resides [1].

[Note—(1) The word ‘Pran’ has many connotations, depending upon the context in which it is used. It is synonymous for Atma or soul; for the vital winds present in the body, such as for example the breath; for Brahm said to reside in the heart of a creature; for pure consciousness; for energy, vitality, vigour and other signs of life; for that benchmark which determines whether a creature is alive or dead. However, in the present context, the Pran refers to the subtle life sustaining vital winds that flow through the body. These winds perform varied functions, and their presence in the ten apertures or holes of the heart is symbolic of their importance in sustaining life. These winds dissolve in blood and lymph and move through the body via the medium used by these to move from one part of the body to another. Since the blood is the vital fluid that passes through the heart, for the purpose of this verse, we should treat it as the medium in which the Pran dwells. That is why blood is treated as being synonymous with life. Without blood, life of a man is simply not feasible.

Further, it is said elsewhere that the wind and fire elements are subtly and inherently present in the water element, the presence of the former (wind/air) is evident in the form of waves, ripples and movement of the water of a river, ocean or a lake, while the presence of the latter (fire) is proved by the warmth in water that sustains an entire marine or aquatic eco-system with its own vibrant life. Since blood is fluid, it represents water, and therefore inherently possesses the wind as the Pran or the vital life sustaining force inherent in it. And that is why blood ‘flows’. The fire element keeps it ‘warm’.

(2) The heart has ten apertures or holes in which life in the form of blood flows. The vital winds are also ten in number. They are called (1) Pran, (2) Apan, (3) Saman, (4) Udan, (5) Vyana, (6) Naag, (7) Kurma, (8) Krikal, (9) Devdutta, and (10) Dhananjay. (Trishiki Brahmin Upanishad, 2/77-87) Since these vital winds move and pervade throughout the body through the network of ducts that carry blood supply in the body, they enter and leave the heart along with the latter through the various arteries, veins and capillaries that have the heart as their pump-house.

(3) Again, since it is the pumping action of the heart that induces the flow of blood, it symbolises the presence of some life, some conscious factor which keeps the body alive. Indeed, the heart is the only tissue inside the body that shows physical signs of activity by constantly throbbing and pulsating. In fact, when the heart stops beating, the brain, of which a man is so proud and which entitles him to rule over the world, dies instantly. Therefore, the heart is actually the most important tissue or organ in the body, and is hence the seat of the supreme Atma because a king is always seated on the highest seat.

(4) All Upanishads dealing with the philosophy of Yoga describe the heart as ‘lotus shaped’. This flower is a symbol of purity, sublimity, holiness and divinity. The wisest creator Brahma, who had pronounced the Vedas at the time of creation, had also been born atop a lotus stemming out of the navel of the Viraat Purush (Vishnu). It is in this lotus the divine Being (Atma) lives as the Lord of the creature.

(5) The above discussion is at the subtle level. At the gross level, we see that the physical heart of a man indeed has ten apertures or holes as follows:--

(1) the opening of the superior Vena Cava that brings blood from the upper part of the body into the right auricle; (2) the inferior Vena Cava for blood from the lower parts of the body; (3) the valve between the right auricle and the right ventricle; (4) the Trunks that take blood from the right ventricle to the lungs; (5) and (6) the twin valves that bring blood from the left lobe of the lungs to the left auricle; (7) and (8) the two veins that bring blood from the right lobe of the lungs; (9) the valve that takes blood from the left auricle to the left ventricle; and (10) the main artery that takes blood to other parts of the body from the left ventricle. See also canto 11, verse no.1 of this Upanishad.]

2. The creature (i.e. the Atma, because that is the truthful identity of the creature), during the waking state of consciousness when its Pran Vayu (the life sustaining vital wind which is synonymous with Atma or spirit) is associated with the external world, sees so many rivers and so many different cities.

When that Atma is associated with the Vyan wind, it has a divine sight of those exalted souls who are like Gods, such as for example, sages, seers and saints.

When it is associated with the Apaana wind, it sees Yakshas (a type of demi-God), Rakshasas (demonic souls) and Gandharvas (a class of demi-Gods who are celestial musicians and are famous for creating illusions of grandeur).

When it is associated with the Udaana wind, it observes the world of Devas (Gods), called the Devloka or heaven. It sees there the exalted Gods as well as Jayant (the son of Indra, the king of the Gods and heir apparent of the kingdom of heaven) residing there in all their magnificence.

When the creature's Atma associates itself with the Samaana wind, it observes the treasury of the Gods and their capital city.

Finally, when it associates itself with Vairambha, it is able to see everything—what is known, what is heard, what is witnessed and experienced as well as not witnessed and experienced. It gets empowered to see and observe everything—whether true or false. It acquires a divine, transcendental and mystical sight. [2]

[Note—(1) The five winds mentioned above are also called Panch Pran. They are the following:--(a) Pran or breath; (b) Vyan or the wind that maintains equilibrium in the body; (c) Apaana or the wind which moves down in the body in the intestines and controls ingestion, digestion and excretion; (d) Udaana or that wind which moves up inside the body and helps to speak and lift the body from a lying posture; (e) Samaana or the wind which helps in circulation and equal distribution of nutrients in the body; (f) Vairambha refers to that state of existence when a man can dispassionately see and clinically analyse the two apparently opposite aspects of anything, the so-called two sides of a coin. This entails observing both the obvious and truthful as well as that is misleading and false. This ability of the Atma comes when the mind is totally unbiased, free from any extraneous considerations, and free from being torn between two situations, unable to decide what is true in the absence of correct knowledge. See also Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no.31-32 which is chapter no.2 of this anthology.

There is a lot of symbolism here. The 'Pran' breathes life into a creature; this creature then interacts with the outside world and sees its colourful canvas, symbolised by the rivers and cities.

The 'Vyan' makes the mind stable and steadfast; it helps overcome fickleness, and it therefore inspires a creature to seek the company of noble souls such as sages and saints.

The 'Apaana' passes through the anus, the lowly part where all the excretory gross matters which are of no use of the body accumulate in the form of stool; it is therefore the wind that is treated as being the most lowly amongst all the five winds. That is why when it dominates the creature, he symbolically sees those entities which are considered lowly in the hierarchy of spiritual development, such as the Demons and the Gandharvas.

The 'Udaana' lifts a man from his lying down position, which is a symbol of his spiritual upliftment. It helps to buoy the mind and prevent it from sinking into the abyss of ignorance and delusions by making it steady and resolute. Therefore, he is able to rise above the mundane and subtly see those who are better than him and have found a place in the heavens; his sight is always focused on the higher and nobler values in creation so that one day he can also become a resident of heaven, like those Gods.

The ‘Samaan’ wind takes care of the whole body like a parent, without being favourable to any particular part, and being non-partisan, unbiased, equanimous and gracious in its dealings with all the corners of the body. It therefore symbolically endows success in all enterprises in which the creature participates. This helps all round welfare and well being, symbolised by being able to have access to the treasury of the Gods. This wealth is heavenly, and worldly interpretation of treasury as being equivalent to money is not the criterion here.

Finally we have ‘Vairambha’; the wind which bestows mystical powers that enables a man to see what an ordinary eye cannot.]

3. The heart has ten into ten (i.e. a hundred) veins. Each has seventy two thousand branches or capillaries. In this way, there are numerous ducts of the body in which the Pran or the Atma (both being synonymous with each other) roams when the man is sleeping and dreaming. Then, in his dreams, he virtually speaks in and sees this world in the other world (i.e. his sub-conscious recollects the scenes and events of the world in which the man had lived while awake and then conjures up an imaginary world of its own called the world of dreams which draws upon the man’s experiences of the world known to him while he was awake). He then thinks that he knows everything, that he is very wise and knowledgeable.

While the Atma is in this state of existence, called the dreaming state of consciousness, it is called ‘Samprasad’ (meaning that it uniformly spreads itself in all the veins and capillaries as well as the nerves of the body; it disperses itself uniformly in all the ducts of the body. It literally ‘resides uniformly at all places at the same time’). In such a situation, the Atma (the pure conscious), in association with the Pran (the vital wind which infuses physical life in the body and sustains it), help the latter to protect the body. Or in other words, while a man sleeps, the Atma joins hands with Pran and prevents the latter from either escaping from the body or causing any harm to the body. It also ensures that all the vital signs of life and actions of the various organs and tissues of the body go on unhindered and uninterrupted.

The ducts (i.e. veins) in the body have fluids of different shades of colours flowing in them—such as green, blue, yellow, red and white. [These refer to the mucous, blood, bile, lymph, various hormones and enzymes and other such chemicals that are present inside the body] [3]

[Note—(1) The concept of the Atma or Pran living in the numerous Naadis or ducts of the body while the man sleeps has been elaborately dealt with in Brihad Aranayaka Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no.16-20, and Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no.9-30. This Upanishad is chapter 2 of this anthology.

(2) The various Prans, or the life sustaining vital winds present inside the body, and the fact that there are indeed 72 thousand ducts (veins and nerves) called ‘Naadis’ has been elaborately dealt with in the following other Upanishads—Jabal Darshan Upanishad, canto 4, verse no.6-47, and Trishiki Brahmin Upanishad, verse no.75-88.

(3) There are four states of consciousness in which a creature exists. These have been discussed in canto 9 of this Upanishad.]

4. The eclectic, sublime and holy Divinity present in the heart resembles a white lotus or a lily flower which has attained full bloom. The fibers of this divine lotus/lily are so fine and micro-thin that they resemble a hair follicle split into a thousandth part. These fibers

of the divine lotus/lily are the symbolic counterparts of the numerous capillaries of the heart called 'Hita'. The supreme, divine, ethereal, sublime, subtle and fundamental principle called the Atma or soul (which is pure consciousness) is present in the subtle space or sky present in the heart. This space or sky is called the 'Hridya Akash'¹. The core or the central part or the focal point of this space, where the essential element called the Atma is present, is called the 'great core or the treasury or the citadel'.

[The idea expressed here is that the heart is the most essential tissue or organ of the body without which life is just not possible in a man. But the 'heart of this heart' is the Atma, as it were. The physical heart functions and keeps the body alive because the subtle Atma is at the core of it and empowers it from well within its very core to carry out its assigned function, which is to keep the body alive. The Atma is like the electric that drives the motor of life.]

When the creature is in deep sleep state of existence (which is beyond the dreaming state, and is the 3rd state of consciousness), he does not see any dream nor has any hopes, expectations, aspirations and desires. In that state, there is no concept of the existence of any God or any abode of a God, there is no fire sacrifice or any other religious rites or sacraments that needed to be done. In that neutral state of existence, the creature is neither a father nor a mother, it is neither a friend nor a kith or kin of anybody; he is neither a thief nor a killer of Brahmin. The creature in that mysterious and esoteric state of existence is synonymous with the magnificent and stupendous entity called the Atma, which is the pure self, the pure consciousness, the immaculate soul, the ethereal spirit.

It (the Atma with which the creature is identified in this state) is an embodiment of 'Tej' (natural radiance, splendour, energy, illumination, vitality, vigour and glory). It is submerged in an ocean of Amrit; that is, it is soaked and surrounded from all sides with an immense surge of eternal bliss, happiness and peace. [Amrit is the ambrosia drunk by the Gods which bestows eternity and bliss to them.]

Outside this ocean is the land mass consisting of a dense forest. The Atma, when it wakes up from sleep, rushes towards the world through the path passing through this forest. This is what those who are most exalted, wise and realised, and are like emperors in the spiritual field, have expounded and preached. [4]

[Note—(a) ¹There are *ten subtle skies* in metaphysics. They are the following:--(1) Ghatakash—the space inside a hollow pot; (2) Mathakash—the space inside a holy building, such as a shrine; (3) Hridyakash—the subtle space inside the heart, the space referred to in this verse; (4) Akash—the blank space above the earth; the Firmament; (5) Suryakash—the space around the sun, or the solar system illuminated by the light of the sun; (6) Parakash—the space above or beyond the solar system, it is said to burn with the celestial fire; (7) Mahakash—the great sky that is aglow with divine illumination, the heaven; (8) Parmakash—the supreme sky beyond the Mahakash, it is said to be very magnificent and enclose everything that exists, including all the other skies; (9) Tatwakash—the elementary space that is at the core of the concept of space, or the space that surrounds the basic elements of creation; by natural corollary it refers to the subtle, sublime, ethereal and supreme space where the eternal, transcendental Brahm has his abode because Brahm is the cause of all the basic elements of creation; there is complete beatitude and felicity there; and (10) Antariksha—the space where the stars are present.

(b) Another interpretation of the word Akash in metaphysics is the following:--the space surrounding the five sheaths or 'Koshas' present in the body of a creature. These are determined as follows—(1) Food sheath called 'Anna Maye Kosh', (2) Vital Air

sheath called 'Pran Maye Kosh', (3) Mental sheath called 'Mano Maye Kosh', (4) Intellect sheath called 'Vigyan Maye Kosh', and (5) Bliss sheath called 'Anand Maye Kosh'.

(c) According to Mandal Brahmino-panishad, canto 4, section 1, verse no.1-4 (chapter 10 of this book), there are five following skies—(1) Akash—that sky which is dark and neutral from within and without; (2) Parakash—that sky which has hell-like fire burning in it from within and without; (3) Mahakash—that sky which has divine illumination from within and without; (4) Suryakash—that sky which is radiant and splendorous like the sun from within and without; and (5) Parmakash—that space which is full of beatitude and felicity, and is all encompassing. The skies have also been described in Trishiki Brahmin Upanishad, 1/5-8.

(d) The scene conceptualized here can be understood by a worldly simple example. The Atma is like an oyster which withdraws itself in its shell (Kosh) when the man sleeps. Like an octopus, it withdraws its tentacles representing the various sense organs of the body which had been spreading in all directions when the man was awake. With its limbs withdrawn, the octopus lies peacefully ensconced somewhere in the bottom of the ocean where it is undisturbed and un-tormented. It is only when it spreads out its tentacles that it begins to move and feel the world around it. Much like an amphibious creature, when the Atma wakes up, it reaches the shore of the ocean of bliss, and comes in contact with land—it begins to see the world outside the ocean of complete bliss where it had been lying till now. This external world looks very exciting, charming and enticing to it, but to reach the pleasures offered by this world, it has to negotiate the formidable forest. But so alluring is the sight of the world that the creature decides to take the risk of entering the forest, fully confident that it would retrace its steps when it so desires. Once landed and once inside the dense forest, it loses its way and is forced to adjust itself in its new habitat. It gradually begins to treat the world as its home. It crawls through the forest on a path visible to it, and in due course of time reaches the other end of the forest. Then it sees a complete new world, and its natural habitat of the blissful ocean is no where in sight. Being a creature of the water and not of the land, it gets tormented and suffers a lot. Some householder picks it up and it belongs to this household now. It meets some other unfortunate creature there and begets children and raises a family. The disruption of the 'placenta' is complete! Now, if luck favours it, the creature meets another one of its kind who reminds it of its original home. It is then the creature becomes homesick and then tries to sneak away from its life of slavery. If it's sincere, it tries to find out a way out of his predicament. Some wise one then advises and shows the creature the way back to the ocean. If the creature is intelligent and wise, he chucks everything and returns home to his original habitat in the ocean of bliss and tranquility. These postulates are further elaborated in canto 5 below.]

Canto 5

[This canto describes how the Atma becomes active through the medium of the various sense organs collectively called the gross body of the creature, and the mind-intellect complex called its subtle body. In this context, those aspects that relate directly with the Atma are called 'Adhyatma', those which relate to the gross world are called 'Adhibhut', and those which relate to the subtle powers and forces operating in Nature are called 'Adhidaivat'. Both the microcosm (Atma) and the macrocosm (heavenly Gods) are included in these three words mentioned hereinabove. See also canto 7.]

1. The venerable Atma subtly resides in the Naadis (nerves and veins and other ducts present in the body) as the conscious factor, the vitality, energy and life that flows through these ducts and sustains life in the body of a creature. The network of Naadis is the main path or medium for the Atma to do what it wants to do. That is, the Atma interacts with the world through the body by keeping it alive and enabling the various organs to function properly, but the essential means to achieve this is the proper functioning of the various nerves and veins.

[Now let us take the example of the eye--] The 'eye' is like the venerable Atma; it is visible manifestation of the Atma (because the eye has consciousness and is the 'seer' of the world). Therefore it is called 'Adhyatma'. That object (the external, gross, visible world) that the eye sees is called 'Adhibhut' (because it essentially consists of the various 'bhuts', or elements such as earth, water, fire, wind and sky in different forms and shapes). The subtle, supreme, sublime and almighty authority that empowers the eye to see (i.e. the faculty of sight; the special and exclusive ability of the eye to see something, an ability that other organs do not have) is like the Sun God (Aditya) which lights up the world to 'enable' the eye to see the latter. [That is why we cannot see in the dark]

Therefore, this Aditya is called 'Adhidaivat'. Now therefore, that 'divine eye' (not the physical eye, but the eye representing the 'complete conscious factor' enabling the creature to see anything, and without which, no matter how hard the creature tries, it cannot see) that subtly, imperceptibly but inherently lives in all the organs of the body (making them alive, active and conscious), the objects of the world (making them look real, attractive and worth interacting with, for no one would like to deal with anything that is unattractive and like it were dead), the Aditya (the Sun, making it shine), the Naadis (making them energized with vibrant and active life, which in turn makes the body alive), the Pran (the vital winds, enabling them to display their stupendous potentials by infusing and sustaining life in an otherwise gross and inane dead body), Vigyan (the stupendous potentials of the intellect and mind acquired by thorough and rational knowledge and learning of anything, making such knowledge and skills so potential, effective and powerful, so useful and sought after by the creature, for no one wants to pursue worthless knowledge and acquire useless skills;), Anand (bliss and happiness; beatitude and felicity), the Hridyakash (the Atma itself and its immediate surroundings, here referring to the heart, because the Atma lives in the subtle space of the heart—see verse no.4 of canto 4 above), and the rest of the body—is called pure consciousness, or the Atma. It is the Godhead personified.

Verily, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless. [1]

[Note—To be specific, the nerve that especially relates to the eye is the optical nerve that enables the creature to see by the medium of the eye. But in a more general way, the word 'Naadi' refers to the uncountable, micro-fine network of nerves in the body which is like the wiring circuit of an electronic gadget through which electric impulses pass constantly but imperceptibly. The entire machine will fail to function even if one single wire of the complex circuitry snaps or short-circuits. In this analogy, the Naadis are the

wires through which the electric impulse of consciousness passes, and the electric itself is the Atma or pure consciousness which not only activates the machine but keeps it running. Incidentally, the very purpose of Yoga, or meditation, is to keep these Naadis in fine fettle.]

2 [The same logic of the eye being a manifestation of the supreme and venerable Atma is now being extended to the ears--] Similarly, the organ of the 'ear' is like the venerable Atma. It is a manifestation of the Atma, and is therefore called 'Adhyatma' (i.e. that which pertains to the Atma as a divine entity). The words or sound that is the object of hearing by the ears are called the 'Adhibhut' (because the sound and the words have their origin and existence in the mortal terrestrial world made up of the elementary elements of creation called the 'Bhuts'). The various directions are called 'Adhidaivat' as the basic sounds that form the words, or the alphabets that make up the word, are deemed to be the root or seed words for the different patron Gods of the creation who reside in the various directions¹.

The basis of all these is the network of Naadis (ducts called nerves that carry the various sense perceptions and electric impulses that activate each and every organ of the body, as well as the veins and capillaries that carry blood and other vital fluids to the different corners of the body) which keeps the body alive and enables it to hear sound and the word. [See note to verse no.1 above.]

The vital life or conscious factor present in the ear which enables it to hear, the energy of the sound waves which transforms the sound into meaningful words, the directions which are impregnated with the sound energy, the nerves through which a man keeps conscious and hears or perceives any sound (here referring, inter alia, to the auditory nerve), the Pran which keeps him alive, the Vigyan (sound and rational knowledge that is applicable in practice; the intellect and discrimination faculty of the mind) that enables the man to make sense of the words heard, the satisfaction and joy one gets when one comes to realise the great blessing of hearing that he possesses (as compared to a deaf man denied this privilege), the Hridyakash (the subtle Atma residing in the heart) that feels gladdened and exhilarated when one hears anything pleasant and comforting, and the pure consciousness which flows (much like the electric current) inside the whole body—verily, that indeed is the Atma.

Surely, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless. [2]

[Note--¹The various Gods represent the various forces of Nature in their best and purest form, untainted and uninfluenced by the negative forces. Therefore, they are considered superior to everything else in creation. Even as only competent, honest, trustworthy, truthful and expert people are put in charge of any department in today's world, the creator entrusted these forces, in their sublime and ethereal form, to be in charge of his creation. According to the metaphysical concept of sound, the entire creation is represented by the divine word OM, whose three letters A, U and M stand for creation, development and conclusion respectively. The letters are not lifeless alphabets, but they have divine energy inherently but latently present in them, making them potent and powerful instruments of the creator. That is why repetition of the Mantras have so great

effects. Since sound emanates from any one of the directions of the earth, it is said here that the constituent parts of the words represent the 'Godly' aspect of creation, called 'Adhidaivat' or that which pertains to the Gods.

The various directions and their patron Gods have been described in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 3/1/9, 3/9/21-24 (chapter no.2 of this anthology).

According to the Purans, the twelve directions and their patron Gods are the following—(1) East—Indra; (2) South East—Fire God; (3) South—Yam God, the God of death and final judgment; (4) South West—Nairiti; (5) West—Varun, the Water God; (6) North West—Vayu, the Wind God; (7) North—Kuber, the God of treasure and wealth; (8) North East—Ishan, Lord Shiva; (9) Zenith—Brahma, the creator; (10) Nadir—Prithivi or earth; (11) Sun; and (12) Moon.]

3. The rationale that was applied to the eye and ear can be applied to the 'nose' also. Hence, the subtle imperceptible power of the nose to smell, the conscious factor inherently present in it that enables the nose to smell, is called 'Adhyatma' (because it relates directly to the Atma that empowers the nose). The objects of the world that it smells are called 'Adhibhut' (because smell emanates from gross things of the world consisting of the elements called Bhuts). The earth, which harbours everything dead or alive and inherently bears the virtue of smell which is an integral part of everything related to earth, is the 'Adhidaivat'.

[This fact can be verified by bringing a clod of earth near the nostril; it emanates a typical 'earthy smell or fragrance'. All pots made from earth lend their typical earthy smell and flavour to anything kept in them, as is evident from water kept in such pots or pitchers. Houses made of mud also effuse a distinct sweet earthy fragrance from their walls. There is no smell in the sky, but anything with the 'earth element' present in it would emanate a smell.]

The Naadi is the channel through which the nose is empowered to smell and the body to react to that smell.

[The olfactory nerves related to the perception of smell are present in the nose and not in, say, the eye or the ear. The Atma manifests its magical and mystical ability to smell through the olfactory nerve especially empowered for this purpose. The veins and capillaries that carry blood and other nutrients to the nose to it keep alive and functioning in prime shape also subtly have the life factor called the Atma or consciousness present inherently in them. Without the Atma being intrinsically present in these ducts, the nose would lose its importance and significance.]

The vital factor or conscious life which is present in the nose enabling it to smell, that empowers the objects to emit a smell, that enables the earth to bear everything that emits smell or produces it, that enables the Naadis to perform their functions properly, that allows and authorises the Pran to let the nose smell (because it is the Pran, or the breath that keeps a man alive; it is the Pran moving in and out of the nose that enables the nose to breathe in the first place), that enables the intellect to perceive or decipher a particular external stimuli as 'smell' (and not as something else, or some other perception such as sight or sound), that enables the mind and the heart to feel happy to smell pleasant things and feel contented at being able to do so (as compared to a man who has lost the sense of smell due to some disease, for example), that provides joy and bliss to the Atma resident in the heart when the creature feels exhilarated and ecstatic on smelling something sweet, fragrant and divine to smell, and that which moves and pulsates

throughout the body as its vital life and consciousness---verily, that venerable and exalted entity is indeed the Atma.

Verily, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless. [3]

4. In a similar fashion, the conscious factor inherently present in the 'tongue' which enables it to perform its special function to taste (and speak) is called the 'Adhyatma'. The food that it tastes is called 'Adhibhut' (because food obviously consists of gross things, such as plants and animals, and food is needed by the gross body to survive; the Atma does not need any form of gross food whatsoever). The Water God called Varun is the 'Adhidaivat' because no food tastes any good unless the taste buds are activated in the tongue, and chemicals that do this and help the food to be of any good for the body, need water to function. Food needs water to grow and to be of any use to the man, as water is needed to wash it, to cook it, to digest it, to eliminate it, etc. The tongue is the only organ empowered to taste food and initiate the vital function of digestion by secreting saliva which contains digestive enzymes dissolved in water. No other part of the body is empowered with this unique function.

The Naadi is the passage or duct through which the tongue carries out its function to taste and begin the process of digestion (and for that matter, speak), which enables the blood and other chemicals and enzymes to reach the tongue, which carries to the brain the sense of taste perceived by the tongue, and which enables the mind, heart and body to react to that food and its virtues, such as being attracted to any food or feeling repulsive to any other, to be energized and nourished by the food, to feel contented and cheerful by tasting delicious food, and feeling disgusted at stale and tasteless food.

The consciousness empowering authority that enables and empowers the tongue to taste, that enables the food to remain tasty, that is the vital inherent quality present in the water that enables it to convert the gross form of food into its basic ingredients (or break it into its organic and inorganic form that is recognised by the biochemistry of the body) so that the food becomes useful and tasty, that empowers and activates the Naadis to enable the man to benefit from the food and enjoy its taste (and derive nutrition from it), that inspires the Pran to make the man enjoy the food (because only a man in good health and mind can enjoy and derive benefit from the food eaten, as is evident from the fact that a sick man does not enjoy food), that empowers the mind to perceive the sense called taste and distinguish it from other senses or perceptions, that enables a person to enjoy the taste of food and feel contented in heart where the Atma resides, and that provides the entire body the thrill of tasty food tasted by the tongue---verily, that venerable and exalted entity is indeed the Atma.

Surely, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless. [4]

5. Similarly, the conscious factor present in the organ of the 'skin' which enables the skin to carry on its function is known as 'Adhyatma'. Anything in the world worth touching or feeling by the skin is called 'Adhibhut' (because the skin can touch only those things that are basically gross in form, such as a solid or a liquid, and such things belong to the world consisting of the Bhuts or the elements from which all things on this earth are made). The Vayu, or the air/wind element, is called 'Adhidaivat' (because the air is so subtle an element that the skin can feel it but cannot catch hold of it; the wind, as a soft breeze, gives a sense of comfort and joy when it touches the skin and gently massages it; the air in the form of the breath is the life sustaining element amongst the five elements in creation, and it is the patron God, as it were, of the perception of touch. Further, even if we do not make any conscious attempt to touch the wind or the air, they still touch us at all times even though we may not be aware of this fact).

The Naadis keep the skin sensitive and active by bringing blood supply to it and taking the stimuli of touch received by the skin to the brain. Without the Naadis, the skin would not be able to carry out its function in the proper way.

Therefore, the skin, the things that give a sensation of touch or those that are worthy of being touched, the wind or air which gently massages the skin, the Naadis that aid the skin to carry on its function and inject life into it, the Pran (vital wind which keeps the man alive, for a dead man's skin is akin to the sac that holds garbage), the brain that feels the sensation of touch and lends the skin its importance, the pleasant and exhilarating feeling that is derived when one experiences the sense of gentle touch, as is evident when a man whose body had become numb due to some reason begins to 'feel' things once again, the heart (where the Atma resides) which enjoys such feelings of bliss and contentedness, the thrill that the sensation of touch causes in the body---verily, that indeed is the venerable Atma.

Verily, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless. [5]

6. Similarly, the Mana (the thoughts and emotions of the man; the mind-intellect-heart complex) of a creature is related to the Atma, hence it is called 'Adhyatma'. [The Atma has no physical body of its own; it acts through the Mana. The Mana controls all the actions of the body of a man. A man does good things or bad things depending upon the instructions that the mind-intellect-heart complex issues to it. It is the sovereign of the man's behaviour even as the Atma is sovereign of the Mana itself. The conscious factor that controls the Mana is the Atma, because a man without life or Atma will have no Mana, as a dead person has no mind or heart.]

The objects of all such emotions and thoughts in the world are called 'Adhibhut' (because they pertain to the gross world, and only a 'Jiva', or a living creature called Bhut, is able to think and have emotions).

The patron God of the Mana, the Moon, is the 'Adhidaivat' (because the Moon is said to exercise control over the Mana of a man, as is evident when one becomes exceptionally sentimental under the influence of the Moon).

All these entities have their existence only because of the Naadis (ducts such as veins and nerves) present in the body through which consciousness and sensations flow, through which all the sensations and feelings, all emotions and thoughts are brought into effect. Had it not been for the Naadis, the mind, the intellect and the heart would not have functioned, what to talk about their effects on the creature. The veins carry blood, nutrients and chemicals to these subtle organs; the nerves carry the impulse to and fro from them to the other parts of the body, enabling the latter to carry out the instructions of the Mana.

So, that which activates, empowers and regulates the all powerful entity called Mana, that which makes the objects of the world worthy of thought and paying attention to and evoking emotions and igniting sentiments, that which is even the subtle life and conscious factor of the Moon God, empowering him to be so powerful and mighty, that which flows through the Naadis as the spark of life and consciousness, that which empowers the Pran (the vital wind forces of life) to breathe 'life' into the otherwise lifeless gross creature, that which makes the creature blissful and happy and feel contented by generating pleasant thoughts and evoking auspicious emotions in his heart, and that which pervades and flows throughout the body as its consciousness and life--- verily, that is indeed the venerable Atma.

Surely, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless. [6].

7. Likewise, the conscious and enlightening factor that enables the 'Buddhi' (intellect and discriminatory faculty; reasoning and rationality) of a man to acquire its stupendous potentials and powers, is called the 'Adhyatma'. All the objects that are the subject matter of intellect and worthy of knowing and contemplating about are 'Adhibhut', while Brahma, the creator, is their 'Adhidaiv' or the patron God (because he is the God who pronounced the Vedas at the time of creation, and these Vedas are repository of all knowledge that exist in this creation).

The Naadis (ducts such as veins and nerves) are the roots from which all gained their respective importance and significance, because it is the Naadis through which life and consciousness flows.

[The veins take blood to the brain and keeps it active and nourished, the nerves obviously play an all-important role in the functioning of the brain and therefore of the intellect. Their importance in the body cannot be underestimated or over emphasised at any cost.]

Hence, that which activates, empowers and regulates the intellect, that which entitles the objects of intelligent thought and application of rationality to be worthy of such thoughts and rationality, that which entitles the subjects of learning and deep ponderings to be of value, that which has empowered even the creator Brahma, that which flows as life and consciousness in the Naadis, that which empowers the Pran to inject life and intelligence into an otherwise lifeless and dud creature, that which lives inherently in knowledge and makes it so worthy, effective, powerful and sought after, that which provides happiness, contentedness and bliss on acquisition of the Buddhi (as is

evident when we see a wise man remaining calm and peaceful when he applies his intelligent mind to any given situation, as opposed to a man who easily becomes emotional and upset due to ignorance and lack of reasoning), that which lives in the realm of the heart and helps it coordinate with the intellect (i.e. synchronise the emotions of the heart with the intelligent and rationalism of the brain), and that which pervades throughout the body as its life and consciousness---verily, that is indeed the venerable Atma.

Verily, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless. [7].

8. In the same vein, 'Ahankar' (the traits defined as ego, pride, haughtiness and arrogance) is akin to 'Adhyatma' (because only a living creature, thereby implying the presence of Atma, who has some special qualities and powers can think of being proud and be haughty, it is only a living person who can have any ego, and displaying arrogance needs the proportionate support of strength of arms and authority to make it tenable and effective. These traits, though negative, are indicative of power, authority and potentials present in the person who displays them, and Atma is the only entity that empowers a creature do anything). Those objects of the world that incite Ahankar (or make a man feel proud and arrogant about, incite ego and haughtiness in him) are akin to 'Adhibhut' (because only gross things of the world can lead a man to have negative traits, for spiritual possessions make a man humble and pious instead of being haughty and arrogant, or have any kind of false ego and pride).

The patron God of Ahankar is Rudra (the angry form of Lord Shiva, because the presence of Ahankar (ego, pride and self-importance) excites unnecessary anger, jealousy and wrathfulness, a desire to crush anything that stands in the way of one exercising superiority over others and causing hindrance in achieving anything that Ahankar pushes a man to acquire or achieve, and then retain his acquisition; he will become annoyed and angry if anyone questions his behaviour). Therefore he is 'Adhidaivat'.

As in previous cases, these have any relevance only till the time the Naadis (the various nerves and veins of the body) are active (for a dead man does not have any Ahankar whatsoever).

Therefore, that which activates, empowers and regulates these negative traits called Ahankar in a man, that which creates any notion of worthiness in an object so that its possession arouses a sense of Ahankar in a man, that which empowers the angry form of Rudra (Lord Shiva) to be able to effectively implement his anger and wrath, or be angry and wrathful in the first place, that which flows as consciousness and life through the various Naadis, that which inspires the Pran to propel a man with sufficient energy, courage and strength to be proud, have ego, be arrogant and haughty, that which makes a man feel happy and enjoy his Ahankar (instead of feeling guilty and ashamed of it), that which lives in the space of the heart as Ahankar (because the heart is more pliable to such emotions as compared to the intellect-mind complex), and that which pervades throughout the body as its life and consciousness---verily, that is indeed the venerable Atma.

Surely, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless. [8].

[Note—Lord Shiva has eleven forms, and one of them is ‘Rudra’, which literally means anger, wrath and vehemence. The Lord is considered to be the most enlightened of the Trinity Gods, and is therefore called Maheshwar. He always remains in a meditative posture, always contemplating and meditating on the supreme Soul and the Truth. But still he shows anger and mercilessness, because one of his tasks is to punish the evil and sinful ones by ruthlessly slaying them in order to protect the good and righteous souls in the creation. Further, when his meditation and peace is disturbed he also becomes angry. He remains aloof and disinterested in the world, because he is very wise and enlightened, and he stays in the form of an ascetic. Ordinary people think that he is proud, arrogant and haughty because he does not give a damn to worldly formalities and niceties of behaviour. Shiva’s failure to conform to set norms of proper and sane conduct makes him look most odd God. The word ‘Rudra’ is used as a metaphor for anger, wrath, vehemence and cussedness. Here the word Rudra is used in its literal sense of anger, wrathfulness and cussedness because a man who has Ahankar usually shows these characters. Lord Shiva has no Ahankar in him, so there is no question of his being implicated with Ahankar. A word has many meanings, and wrong deductions or incorrect interpretations would turn the text on its head.]

9. As an extension of the logic presented in verse no.7 above, the active, conscious and enlightening factor that enables the ‘Chitta’ (the sub-conscious mind; the faculty of reasoning, memory, thought, intelligence, concentration and focus) of a man to acquire its stupendous potentials and powers, is the ‘Adhyatma’ (because the Atma is the only authority that can empower a man to display these virtues).

The objects that are the subject matter of attention by the sub-conscious, are called ‘Adhibhut’ (because the Atma considered them to be worthy of paying any attention and keeping them in the data bank of the memory, as compared to so many other inputs or stimuli that the Atma just forgets and discards as worthless).

The supreme, omniscient, almighty Authority that controls the Chitta and its function is called ‘Kshetragya’, and it is also called the ‘Adhidaivat’.

[The word ‘Kshetragya’ literally refers to an authority that exercises full sway over the domain under its control, and it knows about everything which falls within its realm or area of control and authority. Since the Atma is that authority in this case, it is referred to as Kshetragya. Again, since it is the exclusive Lord of its realm and there is no superior authority to it, it is also Adhidaivat.]

The Naadis (veins and nerves) are at the center of all this; they are the ducts through which the Chitta derives its strength and potentials (because, obviously, Chitta is the function of the mind, and without the help of the nerves and veins neither the mind nor the body can survive to display the powers of the Chitta, or the importance and significance of Chitta).

So, that which activates, empowers and regulates the Chitta, that which makes the objects of the world worthy of contemplation and deep thought of the mind and focus of its faculty of reasoning, memory and sub-conscious, that which is the supreme,

omniscient Authority that governs the Chitta, that which flows through the Naadis as the vital life and consciousness, that which empowers the Pran to breathe life into the man and provide him with the energy, stamina, strength, ability and vitality to use his Chitta effectively, that which lends supremacy to knowledge or any other information which entitles it to be worthy of acquisition by the Chitta and stored in the mind, that which inspires a man to feel exhilarated, contented and happy at this enlightenment and acquisition of knowledge by the Chitta, that which lives in the space of the heart and coordinates its activities with the Chitta besides keeping it activated and throbbing, and that which pervades uniformly throughout the body as its life, vitality and consciousness--verily, that is indeed the venerable Atma.

Verily, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless. [9].

10. The active, conscious factor which enables the 'Vaak', or the faculty of speech, to acquire its stupendous and glorious potentials, is called 'Adhyatma', because the Atma reveals itself, its erudition and wisdom, its majestic powers and potentials through the medium of speech of a man. It is the speech that enables the Atma to express its desires, its intentions, and issue its instructions to the external world.

The subjects talked about and the objects of speech are called 'Adhibhut' (because they pertain to the world consisting of the elements called Bhuts, and also because the person to whom a man speaks is also a mortal creature made up of the five elements called Panch Bhuts).

The Fire God, who symbolically resides in the mouth of a man, is the patron God of speech; hence he is called the 'Adhidaivat'.

The Naadis (veins and nerves) of the body are central to the whole setup, because it is the vital consciousness and life flowing through the various nerves and veins of the body that empowers and enables the man to speak. (The veins supply blood and nutrients to the organs concerned with speaking as well as to the brain that controls the faculty of speech; the nerves concerned with the faculty of speech act in coordination with the brain to enable a man to speak coherently and cogently. These two—the veins and the nerves—work with each other and in close coordination so that a man can speak at all.)

Therefore, that which activates, empowers and regulates the speech and empowers a man to speak, that which gives credence, importance and weight to what is spoken, that which lends glory, majesty, importance, powers, authority and strength to the Fire God, and in turn to the speech itself, that which flows through the Naadis as their vitality, the current of life and consciousness, that which empowers the vital Pran (breath and other vital life sustaining winds) to empower the man to speak by providing him with sufficient energy, strength and stamina, that which infuses and lightens up his speech with knowledge, wisdom and erudition, that which creates exhilaration, satisfaction and joy derived from a good spoken word, that which inspires the heart from inside its core to join the speech and lend it its emotional support to make it vibrant, enchanting, articulate, effective and forceful, and that which pervades throughout the body and allows it to

speak and enjoy a good spoken word as well as to derive happiness from it---that verily is the venerable Atma.

Surely, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless.[10]

11. The two hands are the organs through which the Atma does all the deeds and takes any action in the world; hence they are called 'Adhyatma' (because the Atma manifests itself, inter alia, by enabling the hands to hold and accept anything; it is the consciousness present in the body that provides life, energy and strength to the hands and make them exhibit their skills).

Things that are worthy of being accepted and held by the hands are called 'Adhibhut' (because the hands can hold things that have a physical form, are gross, solid and dense enough to be held by it; since all things in this world are made up of the Bhuts, or the elements, hence the objects held by the hand are one or the other forms of these Bhuts).

And Indra, the kings of Gods, is also the patron God of the hands, and therefore he is called 'Adhidaivat'.

[The Gods represent the subtle, sublime and supreme forces of Nature that regulates the functions of the different parts of the body. Each part has a patron God. The hands are the most important organ because a man can do anything with them; hands enable him to do righteous, virtuous and noble deeds that can ensure his emancipation and salvation. It is the hand by which he worships Gods; it is the hand by which he does sacrifices and other religious duties. Though it is true that he commits horrible deeds with it too, but that is out of his ignorance and stupidity, and does not deprive the hands of their exalted stature of being an instrument for attaining liberation and deliverance. The fact that the patron God of the hand is Indra who is the king of Gods shows the importance of the hand in the hierarchy of organs of the body. In fact, if the hands refuse to do anything, the mind and the heart would be helpless; they would not be able to implement their noble and grand intentions no matter how lofty they are.]

The Naadis (the network of veins and nerves) of the body enable the hands to do anything at all (because otherwise the hands would become numb and lifeless).

Hence, that which empowers, regulates and activates the hands to do deeds and take actions, that which make the deeds worthy of being done by the hands and make things worthy of being held by them, that which gives Indra, the patron God of the hands, to use them to rule over the kingdom of this creation, that which flows as consciousness and vital life in the Naadis, that which enables the Pran (the breath and the vital winds present in the body that control all its vital functions) to infuse life, vitality, stamina and strength to the hands to perform its functions, that which imparts the imperceptible subtle sense that enables the hands to automatically and involuntarily decide what it should and should not do, touch and hold, that which gives a sense of joy, happiness and bliss to the hands when it accomplishes a task successfully, that which inspires the heart to give full emotional support to the hands in their endeavours, and that which pervades throughout the body as its life, vitality and consciousness---verily, that is indeed the venerable Atma.

Verily, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless. [11].

12. Similarly, the two legs are the medium by which the Atma moves (while residing in the body of a creature); hence they are called 'Adhyatma'. [Only a living creature shows movement, and so the very fact that the man can move from one place to another with the help of the legs establishes that it is one organ of the body, like the hands in the previous verse, that showcases the stupendous and magnificent powers of the Atma that it can make even a gross and lifeless bundle of bones, flesh, nerves and veins that the body is, to move from one place to another.]

The places they go to and which are worthy of going, are called 'Adhibhut' (because they pertain to the places in the gross world made up of the elements called Bhuts. The legs carry the body anywhere it is asked or commanded by the mind to take it. But a wise man uses his wisdom and intellect to advice the legs to go to only those places which are worth of going, and bars it from moving towards places unworthy for the Atma to venture into.)

Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and caretaker of the creation as well as the 2nd of the Trinity Gods (consisting of the creator Brahma, the sustainer Vishnu, and the concluder Shiva), who is the patron God of the legs, is the 'Adhidaivat'. [The reason is very evident. Legs help a man to carry out all the activities in this world. Without the legs, a man feels exceedingly helpless and hapless. The hands can do anything and catch anything only if the legs take the man to the site. The legs are the pivot that holds the edifice of the body erect and gives it its majesty and prominence. A sick man remains lying in a reclining posture, whereas the ability to stand is seen as a sign of better health in him. Further, a man's valour, potentials, stamina and abilities are made effective because of the legs, for a lame man can do very little in his active life which requires a lot of physical movements. Likewise, the body can obey the orders of the mind to, say, go on a pilgrimage, to help someone in distress, to perform any religious duty, or even to enable the body to perform its daily chores, only if the legs cooperate. In fact, the hands and legs are the two external instruments of the Atma which act as its secretary and assists it to complete its journey in the world without hindrance, and accomplish all righteous and virtuous deeds in order to become entitled to get liberation and deliverance from the shackles of its past misdemeanours that had forced it to assume a body in the first place.]

The various Naadis (tubular ducts of the body; veins and nerves) are central to the functioning of the legs, because otherwise, if the Naadis do not function properly or refuse to cooperate with the legs, they would be paralysed and helpless to move.

Therefore, that which empowers and activates the legs to move and perform their function of carrying the body, that which regulates the movements of the legs, that which renders importance to place where the legs go and take the Atma resident in the body, that which delegates its majestic and supernatural powers to Lord Vishnu to carry out his duties as the sustainer and caretaker of the creation, that which flows in the Naadis as their vital energy, life and consciousness, that which enables the Pran (the vital life giving breath and other vital winds that regulate the different functions of the body) to provide

the legs with sufficient stamina, strength and energy to move, that which sub-consciously and subtly tells/advises the legs where to go and where not to go, that which gives satisfaction and a sense of achievement to the legs that they have attained their destination successfully, that which, while living in the subtle space of the heart, inspires it to lend its full support and help to the legs to carry on their functions properly and enable the man to walk purposefully, and that which pervades throughout the body as its life, vitality and consciousness---verily, that is indeed the venerable Atma.

Surely, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless. [12].

13. Like the symbolisms drawn above, the anus of the body is the 'Adhyatma' aspect (because the Atma uses it to eliminate all waste matter of the body which is harmful to it); the faecal matter (which is the grossest matter of the body and formed after all the vital and essential nutrients have been extracted from it by the Atma to sustain the body and the various Gods symbolically residing in the body of a creature) is the 'Adhibhut', and the 'death' aspect represents 'Adhidaivat' (because the matter eliminated from the anus has no life in it whatsoever; if it is allowed to remain inside the body, it would cause immense harm. All elements of life have been extracted from the food eaten by the man, and the excreta symbolises death because life has been consumed from it. But the Atma still lives on, hale and hearty, in the body; it is not at all bothered by this 'death'. So, in other words, the lifeless form of food is God of death who serves the living Atma by removing lifeless things from its path).

The Naadis are at the core of the whole process. [Incidentally, the Mool Kand, which is a knot of Naadis or nerves and veins, also has its location in the area of the anus.] The veins and nerves help the alimentary canal to function normally, and helps the nutrients extracted from the food eaten to reach all the corners of the body and the unwanted residual useless matter to be expelled through the anus.

Hence, that which enables the anus to carry out its functions and regulates it, that which also gives the residual matter its shape and consistency and helps it to come out of the body and then decay into its primary constituents or elements, the earth, that which empowers the natural process to bring about decay of faecal matters into their basic elements such as the earth, water, fire (heat and energy), air (as smell), and the sky (in which the smell disperses and the residual matters expelled by the anus are scattered), that which flows through the Naadis as the vital life factor and consciousness, that which empowers the Pran to give sufficient strength to the anus to carry out its designated functions of elimination, that which enlightens a man about this knowledge and matters related to healthy expulsion of body's residue, that which gives the satisfaction obtained after the anus has carried out its functions properly (i.e. when the expulsion of stool is complete, thereby providing great relief to the body and the mind), that which resides in the subtle sky of the heart and inspires the latter to concentrate its energy and attention as well as supply sufficient blood to the organ of the anus so that it can function normally and properly, and that which pervades uniformly throughout the body as its vital life force and consciousness---verily, that is indeed the Atma.

Verily, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless. [13]

14. Similarly, the genital organs are the 'Adhyatma' aspect (because the Atma creates a new creature through the help of this organ). The immense pleasure derived from using this organ relates to worldly pleasures and not spiritual pleasures; hence it is called 'Adhibhut'. The patron God of creation who oversees the entire process of creation, Brahma the creator, is obviously the 'Adhidaivat'.

The Naadis (nerves and veins of the body) are at the centre of the use of the organs of creation (i.e. the genitals), and they help in their proper functioning.

Therefore, that which activates, empowers and regulates the genital organs to carry out their functions, that which enables the particular and typical sensations associated with sexual activity to being categorized as extreme pleasure, ecstasy, joy, blissfulness, exhilaration and elation leading to immense satisfaction, that which empowers Prajapati (Brahma) to create, that which flows through the Naadis as their vital life and consciousness, that which empowers Pran to participate in the divine function of creation, that which is at the core of the science and knowledge of creation, that which gives immense degree of happiness and pleasure in the process of creation, that which lives in the subtle space or sky of the heart and regulates the creation process from there (because the vital emotions of love, desire and passions that are so typical of the sexual process leading to the initiation of the reproductive cycle are associated with the heart more than the mind), and that which pervades uniformly through the body as its vital life factor and consciousness—verily, that indeed is the Atma.

Surely, it is indeed the glorious Atma. It is the Atma that is the only venerable and honourable entity worth adoring and worshipping, worth contemplating and meditating upon. The Atma does not decay or perish; it neither becomes old and infirm or decrepit. The Atma is immortal and eternal; it is fearless; it is without sorrows and sufferings and is free from miseries; it is without an end; it is infinite and measureless. [14]

15. The entity defined above (i.e. the Atma) is the supreme Lord of all that exists (i.e. it is 'Sarvesh'; it is an all knowing and omniscient authority (i.e. it is 'Sarwagya'); it is the emperor of all other authorities and therefore superior to them (i.e. it is 'Sarwaadhipati'); it knows the internal feelings and emotions of all (i.e. it is 'Antaryam') because it resides in the center of the heart of all creatures; and it is the basic root from which the rest of the creation has blossomed (i.e. it is 'Sarwasya-Yoni').

It is the entity that is adored, revered, honoured, worshipped and paid tribute to when one enjoys happiness and comfort of any kind, but it does not praise anything itself. [This is because it is the most superior authority in creation, and therefore all are subordinate to it; it shows its benevolence upon its juniors by letting them be proud of their status and activities, but it knows that they are merely carrying out the duties delegated to them by it, and the successful completion of anything is also due to that authority's support and help. Therefore, it just keeps smiling at their false sense of pride

and ego like a caring and doting parent brushes aside small mischief of his or her offspring!]

It is the object of worship and adoration by all the Vedas and other scriptures, but it does not worship or pays tribute to them (because a junior king offers his tribute to the emperor, but the other way round is not the norm).

All forms of food are meant to serve it; that supreme entity has the first right over food. But it does not serve the food or is subservient to it.

[In other words, the food is meant to be of use by the Pran in the form of the Atma, because the Atma uses the nutrients contained in the food to sustain and nourish the whole body of the creature. All other Gods, who are actually personified forms of the various vital forces of Nature that regulate the various functions of the organism which is a microcosm of the vast macrocosmic Nature, are dependent upon the Pran and the nutrients in the food for their sustenance and life. Though it appears that the entire body and all the patron Gods enjoy food and have equal right over it, but the fact is that it is the Pran or the Atma to which the food is actually offered, and the Atma being a kind, benevolent and magnanimous king then redistributes that food to all the other Gods according to their needs and requirements. Even in our day-to-day lives we observe that food is meant to serve us, and it is not the other way round.]

Besides this, it is like the 'eye' of the entire creation, for it is the Atma that enables the living creature to 'see' anything (because a dead entity does not see). It is the authority that commands everyone. It is the life and soul of all the creatures; it is the consciousness present in all the organs of the body that lends life and vitality to the creature and the organs of the body of that creature (because without the Atma, all the organs would be dead and become numb and lifeless; they would die without the Atma being present in the body to which the organs belong). It enables the 'Mana' (representing the heart and mind, the emotions and thoughts, dispositions and inclinations, intentions and purpose; wishes and desires; attention and sub-conscious) to make various 'Sankalps' (resolutions, determinations, vows, firm aspirations and promises). It proves the truth of the maxim of the eternal and eclectic knowledge propounded by the scriptures that everything else except the Atma is perishable. It is beatitude and felicity, peace and tranquility personified. And it is the ultimate resting place where everything that exists finally takes its rest; it is the entity in which everything dissolves and becomes one, without leaving a trace.

The conception of anything having a fraction or division or part does not apply to it, because it is one indivisible and immutable whole. It is beyond the imagination of anyone that it can be ever counted and measured in numerical terms; it is beyond the purview of imagination itself. Say then, where is the question of duality in it¹?

Again, since it does not die, being eternal and imperishable, say then how can it be ever possible to determine whether it dies or not? It's absurd to even think of this possibility.

It cannot be known or ascertained from within and without (i.e. it is simply beyond comprehension). It cannot be known and ascertained by trying to peep inside it, or closely examining it from the outside. It is such a mysterious and mystical entity that it can neither be called a treasury of knowledge, wisdom and erudition, nor as being devoid of these glorious virtues. In fact, it remains aloof from and beyond the domain of knowledge and erudition, because it does not need to acquire any knowledge and

wisdom, being a fount and treasury of these virtues itself, and it does not wish to get involved in futile debates that ignorant fools, who do not know the whole facts, indulge in.

But it's such a magnificent and fantastic entity that though it remains quiet and indifferent to acquiring knowledge, appearing to be not interested in enhancing its level of erudition and wisdom, it is nevertheless all knowing and omniscient.

Except this profound tenet about the Atma, there is no other maxim or axiom that can be preached or expounded or postulated regarding emancipation and salvation. This is also the fundamental preaching and the tenet of the Vedas; it is the basic essence contained in their canons². [15]

[Note—¹If anything is fractionable and divisible, a person can think of the possibility of the existence of its various divisions or fractions or aspects. For example, it is possible to split even the atom, which is the 'brick' used to construct the structure of any molecule, into its various components—the electrons, the protons and the neutrons. But is it possible to break the negative-charged electrons into something else that is not negatively charged? To take another example, a log of wood would remain 'wood' no matter how its shape and size are changed; it can never be categorised as iron or anything else. Electron can change its hidden energy into various forms of energy that it produces, such as heat, electricity and light, but the inherent dynamism of the electron, called its 'energy', can never change. What changes is the form and shape of the energy, but not its basic nature of being the vital force that lends the electron its value and importance in the field of electronics or other aspects of atomic physics. Wood can change into umpteen numbers of shapes and sizes, but all these things would be called 'made of wood' and nothing else. Similarly, the Atma is that single unchanging entity that cannot be assigned numbers and divisions; it is non-dual and it cannot exist in more than one form. It uniformly pervades everywhere, in all imaginable shapes and forms. But to come to the basics, all these would nevertheless be called Atma and nothing else.

²The Vedas preach about the supremacy of the Atma over all other things in this creation. This Atma is the supreme conscious factor present in the whole creation. Whatever that exists is a manifestation of the Atma. Since all that exists is nothing but the Atma, it naturally follows that knowledge and wisdom is also Atma; these qualities and virtues are exhibited by the Atma. At the same time, the lack of knowledge is also a part of creation; therefore it is also an exhibit of the Atma. In short, one should understand that this Atma is an entity that is impossible to comprehend by logic and debates, or by applying rationality and the test of physical proof. This is the great paradox and mystery of the Atma.

See also canto 3, verse no. 1-3, and canto 7, verse no. 1.]

Canto 6

[This canto stresses that all that exists in this creation is one or the other manifestation of the same omnipresent, all pervading Narayan. The latter is the ubiquitous, almighty, supreme and transcendental Lord of creation, and it is he that subtly and imperceptibly dwells everywhere in every form.]

1. There was nothing in the world before the creation came into existence. What was there had no cause or root for its existence, and neither did it have any foundation to support it. It was from that indescribable entity that this creation, this kingdom, came into being. [1]

2. The eyes, the faculty of sight, and the object of sight (the things that are seen by the eyes) are Narayan¹. Similarly, the ear, the faculty of hearing, and the things that are heard are all a revelation of the same Narayan. The nose, the faculty of smell, and the things that are smelt are all the different manifestations of Narayan. The tongue, the faculty of taste, and the things tasted are nothing but Narayan. The skin, the faculty of touch and feeling, and the things felt are all Narayan. The mind, the faculty of thought, and the things thought about are all Narayan. The intellect, the faculty of reasoning, intelligence and discrimination, and the object of the application of these faculties are all Narayan.

Likewise, the inherent quality known as Ahankar (pride and ego; vanity, arrogance and haughtiness), the trait of having Ahankar, and the objects and things that cause or create the element of Ahankar in a creature—all are nothing but Narayan in this form.

Chitta (the faculty of reasoning and thought, the conscious intellect, the powers of discrimination, understanding, paying attention, memorizing, and the ability to recollect and store information that are characteristics of the conscious powers exhibited by the mind and intellect apparatus, the sub-conscious and memory; the ability to concentrate and focus the mind on anything), the stupendous and magnificent powers that are exhibited by Chitta, and the object of application of Chitta—all are manifestations of the same Narayan.

Speech, the faculty that controls speech, the words spoken, and that which is the subject matter of speech, they are all Narayan. Similarly, the hands, the ability of the hands to hold anything, and the objects that are held by the hands—are all Narayan. The legs, the powers of the legs to move, and the places the legs visit—all are the different manifestations of the same Narayan. The anus, the power to expel, and the matter expelled are all Narayan. The genitals, the powers to recreate, and the bliss and ecstasy obtained by their use are all revelations of the same Narayan.

Verily, Narayan is the bearer, sustainer and nourisher (called 'Dhata'), he is the one who determines destiny (hence is called 'Vidhata'), he is the doer of all things and taker of all actions (hence called a 'Karta'), he is the specialist and expert of all deeds done and actions taken in the world (hence called 'Vikarta'), and he is the only majestic, glorious, magnificent and splendorous, supreme divine entity which is the one of its kind and most exalted [2].

[Note—(i) ¹This is because that sublime, transcendental entity was the supreme Authority, called Narayan here, was the one from whom the rest of the creation came into being. Rather, it would be more appropriate to say that that supreme, sublime and subtle force of creation revealed itself into myriad forms while exercising control over each revelation by holding the reins in its own hand. And how was it made possible? That primary force known as Narayan subtly and imperceptibly injected himself as the Atma of every thing that was created. This Atma was the life and the vitality of all that came into being; it represented consciousness that is inherent in every life form that exists. This

same Atma assumed different roles and performed different jobs depending upon the needs of the circumstances. For example, when the need arose to see, it assumed the form of the eye, and the faculty of sight that would enable the inert instrument of the eye to see and make a sense of what was being seen. At the same time, since everything is the Atma, the thing that the eye sees is also one of the various forms of the Atma.

This leads us to a very interesting conclusion—it is the Atma (in the form of the consciousness and the faculty of sight having its controlling centre in the brain) that sees its own self (as the object that is seen) by its own self (as the instrument of the eye). This applies to all the other organs and virtues that are mentioned in this verse.

The word 'Narayan' is used in the Purans to mean Lord Vishnu from whose forehead Lord Shiva was said to be created, while Brahma the creator emerged atop a divine lotus that sprouted from Vishnu's navel. This Brahma created the Vedas and the rest of the visible creation. According to this lore, Vishnu is the father of both Shiva and Brahma. Vishnu is also depicted as the sustainer and nourisher and protector of the creation created by Brahma. According to the Upanishadic lore, he is the Viraat Purush, which means that he is the sum-total of all the gross bodies in this creation. Simply put it means that the Viraat incorporates in his body all the gross forms that this creation has taken. In other words, Lord Vishnu as Viraat represents at the macro level what the individual creature is at the micro level.

(2) This verse essentially says that all forms of creation, the gross as well as the subtle, the microcosm as well as the macrocosm, the lowly as well as the high, the good as well as the bad—in fact everything without exception is a revelation of the one and the same Brahm or Atma known as Narayan. This is the non-dual view of creation and the world. See also canto 7, verse no.1 in this context.]

3. Aditya (the Sun God), Rudra (Lord Shiva; the angry form of God who oversees the conclusion of the creation), Vayu (the Wind God), Vasu (the patron God of worldly assets needed to sustain normal life in the world), and Ashwini Kumars (the twin sons of the Sun God who are regarded as the physician of the Gods), the three Vedas—the Rig, the Yajur and the Sam along with their hymns called Mantras, Agni (the Fire God), and the offering of Ghee or clarified butter that is made to the sacred fire—all of them are the same Narayan in different forms.

It is from this Narayan that everything that exists has risen. He is radiant and splendourous, stupendous and magnificent, divine and sublime, eclectic and ethereal. He is one and the only one. He is one and the only Lord. [3]

4. Narayan is the mother, he is the father, he is the brother, he is the dwelling for the creature and the rest of the creation; he is the solace and the succour, the reprieve and the relief, and he is the friend as well as the destination or final resting place for the creature and the rest of the creation. [4]

5. There are many Naadis (veins and nerves) in the body, and it is the radiant and glorious Narayan who has revealed himself as the consciousness, the vital spark of life which flows and vibrates through these Naadis. Some of the names of these magnificent and glorious Naadis are the following—Viraja, Sudarshan, Jita, Somya, Amogha, Kumara, Amrita, Satya, Madhyama, Nasira, Shishura, Asura, Surya, and Bhaswati. [5]

[Note—The 'consciousness' that keeps the Naadis alive and active is the supreme force called Narayan. Earlier, canto 5 has asserted that it is the Atma that flows and empowers

these Naadis; it is the Atma that is their prime energy and life giving and sustaining vital force or factor. Now this verse says that it is Narayan. Therefore we deduce that Atma and Narayan are synonymous and one and the same entity having two names. While Atma is basically a term preferred by the Upanishads, Narayan is preferred by the Purans. This canto has a great significance in as much as it establishes a bridge between the Upanishads and the Purans; it establishes the non-duality of Brahm. It unequivocally shows that the scriptures talk about the same entity when they refer to 'the supreme and transcendental One', though the terminology used to refer to that 'One' differs from text to text.]

6. That which thunders and rumbles (in the clouds), that which sings or is sung (e.g. the hymns of the Vedas that are recited by scholars), that which flows or blows (e.g. the water and the wind), that which falls (as rain), that which takes the form of Varun (the patron God of water), that which takes the form of Arayama (i.e. the Sun God), that which takes the form of Chandrama (the Moon God), that which takes the form of Kaal (the patron God of death; death and end of anything personified), that which takes the form of a Kavi (literally a poet, but here meaning one who is skilled with words and literature; hence the word refers to wise and scholarly people who are good orators and preachers as well), that which takes the form of a Dhata (a caretaker, sustainer, nourisher, mother), that which takes the form of Prajapati (the lord and master of the subjects of a kingdom; the king and guardian of people; here referring to the different celestial Gods who were assigned the duty to look after the subjects of Brahma's creation), that which takes the form of Brahma (the 4-headed creator of the gross, visible world and the pronouncer of the Vedas), that which takes the form of Maghava (the Lord of clouds and rain; here referring to Indra, the king of Gods), that which takes the form of a Day and a Half-Day (i.e. a short period of time), that which takes the form of various Kalaas¹ (referring to the sixteen virtues and qualities present in a creature), that which takes the form of Kalpa (a long period of time; a sacred performance; a specific process of medical treatment or spiritual attainment; a manner to remove doubts), that which takes the form of higher and sacred aspect of anything, that which takes the form of various directions called 'Dishaas', and that which takes the form of the rest of everything else that exists—verily, all of them are nothing but Narayan.

[That is, all the entities listed here are the various manifestations of the same immutable, ubiquitous, supreme and transcendental Authority known as Narayan.] [6]

[Note—¹The *Kalaas* referred to here are the sixteen so-called 'Kalaas' of a man which represent his different attributes, strengths, qualities and virtues. Since a man is an exact replica of the 'Viraat Purush', who in turn is a subtle manifestation of the sublime Brahm, these sixteen qualities or attributes of a man refer to the 16 qualities of Brahm himself. These qualities or attributes are the following—

(i) Shraddha (faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect, devotion), (ii) Pran (life; the very essence of creation), (iii) Akash (the all-pervading, all-encompassing sky or space element), (iv) Vayu wind, air element), (v) Tej (energy, splendour, radiance, glory, might, majesty and fire element; see also section 2, 5 and 6), (vi) Apaha (water element which is the all-important ingredient for life—see also section 5 and 6) (vii) 'Prithivi' (earth

element which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation—see also section 5 and 6) (viii) Indriya (the organs of the body, both the organs of perception as well as of action), (ix) Mana (mind and heart and their stupendous potentials —see also section 5 and 6), (x) Anna (food, the element without which life is simply not imaginable because it provides it with the basic nourishment and energy —see also section 5 and 6), (xi) Virya (semen, sperms, standing for courage, valour, potency, vitality and prowess), (xii) Tapa (austerity and penance, forbearance and tolerance of hardships, carrying out strict religious vows) (xiii) Mantra (the ability to give good advice, the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, logically arrive at a conclusion), (xiv) Karma (taking actions and doing deeds), (xv) Loka (worldly interactions and behaviours), and (xvi) Naam (name, fame, renown, honour and glory).

In simple terms it means that a person's total composite personality, his characteristic attributes and individuality, his vitality and stamina, his prowess, powers and strength, his drive and vigour et al can be divided into sixteen parts.]

7. 7. All that is happening now, or all that exists now in the present, all that had happened and existed in the past, and all that would happen and exist in the future—verily, they are all manifestations of the divine Purush. [The word Purush refers to the primary Male who is also known as the Viraat Purush as well as Vishnu.]

He is the supreme and transcendental Lord of the immortal world (i.e. the heaven). He is also the Lord of all the mortal creatures who sustain and develop themselves relying upon the strength provided by the food eaten by them (and as a natural corollary die in the want of food). [That is, the mortal creatures of the world have no strength of their own; they depend on food for survival and development; they perish when the food is not made available to them. This is not the case with the supreme Lord who is 'eternal and self sustaining'.]

Wise, erudite and scholarly persons always focus their attention on the divine, eclectic, ethereal and glorious abode of Lord Vishnu that is radiant, bright and splendorous as the Sun.

The Sun is like the 'celestial eye' which helps the entire creation to 'see' with its bright light¹.

Those senior wise men who are never angry and spiteful, who always remain alert and careful, are able to experience and witness it (i.e. they can perceive that glorious heaven where the Viraat has his residence). That which they experience, witness and realise as the supreme abode or destination of the soul is the divine and sublime abode of Lord Vishnu, and it is called the 'Param Pada'².

This is the profound tenet which describes the path of emancipation and salvation. This is the axiom and maxim postulated in the canons of the Vedas. This is their teaching. [7]

[Note--¹Here the 'Sun' is used as a metaphor for the eye of the Viraat Purush, because the Sun lightens up the realm and enables all the creatures to see everything for themselves. The individual creature is a microcosm of the Viraat Purush. That is why the patron God of the eyes is the Sun God. When the creation came into being, the Sun God took up residence in the eye of the man to enable him to see the world around him. Even as the

eye is the light of the body of a man at the micro level, the heavenly sun is the eye of the Viraat Purush at the macro level.

²This destination, known as the 'Param Pada' is the supreme state which a spiritual aspirant aspires to achieve. It is not any physical place known as 'heaven' as such, but it is a symbolic destination whereby the soul of the individual creature reaches the citadel of spiritualism where the soul becomes one with its primary source, the supreme cosmic Soul, by merging with it. This is its final destination, and is called emancipation and salvation. The devotee reaches the destination which he aspires for. For example, devotees of Vishnu find an abode where that Lord resides, and that abode is called Vaikunth. Those who worship Viraat Purush reach Brahma Loka. Those who worship Brahm also reach Brahma Loka, but this abode is a symbolic heaven, for the worshippers of Brahm, there is no return to this mundane world as they would have merged their souls with the cosmic Soul known as Brahm. An entire Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Narayan. It is called 'Narayano-panishad'. Another Upanishad dedicated to this theme appears in the Atharva Veda, and it is called 'Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad'.]

Canto 7

[This canto essentially describes and extols the pure conscious and all-pervading cosmic entity called the Atma in its macrocosmic, subtle and sublime form which imbues and imbrues the entire creation from within and without. It also highlights the magical and mystical attributes of this esoteric entity known as the Atma—the great mystery that 'it is' and 'it is not' at the same time. This particular paradox is typical of the Atma and makes it beyond comprehension. Another almost identical Upanishad is 'Adhyatmo-panishad'. Its verse no.1 is a virtual image of this Canto. Besides, the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad has a similar exposition in its Canto 3, Brahman 7.]

1.That Atma which resides in the cavern-like deep recesses of the heart inside the body, has no birth or any beginning, is the only one of its kind, and is eternal, everlasting, constant and perpetual. [This is the microcosmic Atma that is being referred to here. See also canto 4. The same Atma pervades the whole cosmos as the macrocosmic Atma. This fact is postulated now--]

The 'Prithivi' (the earth) is its (Atma's) body; it pervades uniformly throughout the earth (as its life sustaining and nourishing virtue and its other magnificent characteristic qualities). But the irony is that the earth element is not aware of its presence and importance (i.e. the earth does not know that all its glorious virtues and potentials that make it so renowned, sought after, important and vital are because of the Atma residing inherently in its bosom while uniformly soaking the entire earth with its consciousness that radiates out from it like the rays of the sun; see also canto 5, verse no.15).

[The earth thinks that it has such a great importance that no life can exist without it; it is the foundation upon which the rest of the creation rests; it is vital for sustenance and nourishment of the creation. But it errs in its conceptions. It is the Atma inherently present in the earth element that enables the earth to exhibit its stupendous qualities.]

The 'Apaha' (water element) is its (Atma's) body; it pervades uniformly throughout the water element (as its vital strength and its energy, its life sustaining and nourishing virtues, and its vital importance and significance). But the irony is that the

water element is not aware of its presence and importance (i.e. the water does not know that all its glorious virtues that make it so renowned, sought after, important, significant and vital are because of the Atma residing inherently in it). [Like the earth, the water element also thinks that it is very important for life, but it forgets that left on its own, it is powerless. It is the vital Atma present in the water that makes it so important and useful for life and creation. The pride of the water about its importance is misplaced and misconceived.]

The 'Tej' (energy, the virtues of radiance, splendour, majesty, strength and glory) that a creature possesses is its (Atma's) body. It pervades uniformly throughout the Tej element (as its vital strength, powers and energy, its glorious and majestic virtues, its magnificence, splendour and radiance, its vital importance and significance). But the irony is that neither the Tej nor the creature is aware of its presence and importance (i.e. the Tej does not know that all its glorious and unique virtues that make it so renowned, sought after, important, significant and vital are because of the Atma residing inherently in it).

[Like its predecessors, the Tej thinks that it has such magnificent virtues and stupendous powers that it is sought by everyone; but it forgets that all its glorious and magnificent virtues are actually those of the Atma which resides in its body. Without the Atma, the Tej would be lifeless and without any radiance as an extinguished fire.]

The 'Vayu' (the wind element) is its (Atma's) body; it pervades uniformly throughout the wind element (as its vital strength and its energy, its life sustaining and nourishing virtues, lending it its vital importance and significance). But the irony is that the wind element is not aware of its presence and importance (i.e. the wind does not know that all its glorious and unique virtues that make it so renowned, sought after, important, significant and vital are because of the Atma residing inherently in it).

[For example, the wind thinks that it is so powerful that it has uprooted trees in a strong and fiercely blowing storm, but it does not realise that the force that enabled it to become so powerful and potent and bring about this uprooting is the Atma intrinsically and inherently present in it. It becomes unduly proud of its own potentials, but this pride is unwarranted and is an erroneous notion. This concept has been elaborately explained in Keno-panishad of the Sam Veda tradition by citing an example, wherein a Yaksha asks the Wind God to lift a dry leaf, and it fails to move it.]

The 'Akash' (the sky; the space; the Firmament) is its (Atma's) body; it pervades uniformly throughout it (lending the sky its characteristic features and qualities—as being vast, endless, measureless, immutable, eternal, everlasting, colourless, pure, incorruptible, spotless, neutral, calm, tranquil, steady and perpetual, omnipresent, all encompassing and all pervading etc.). But the irony is that the sky element is not aware of its presence and importance (i.e. the sky or Akash element does not know that all its glorious and magnificent virtues that makes it so renowned and famous, so important, significant and vital, so unique and one of its kind, is because of the Atma residing inherently in it).

The 'Mana' of a creature (the mind and heart; the thoughts and emotions; that which involves a creature's attention) is its (Atma's) body; it pervades uniformly throughout the Mana (and determines all the emotions and thoughts of a creature; it determines the desires, determinations, aspirations, hopes, volition and expectations that a creature has; it determines where the mind fixes itself and where not). But the irony is

that the Mana is not aware of its presence and importance (i.e. the Mana does not know that all its glorious and astounding virtues that make it so renowned, pampered and sought after, so important, significant and vital are because of the Atma residing inherently in it). [Like the earth, the water, the sky and the Tej, the Mana also thinks that it is very important for a creature and it determines how the creature thinks and behaves, that it determines the basic character of the creature. But it forgets that left on its own, it is powerless. It is the vital Atma present in the Mana that makes it so important and useful for life and creation. The pride of the Mana of its importance is therefore misplaced and misconceived.]

The 'Buddhi' (the intellect, reasoning and discrimination faculty of a creature) is its (Atma's) body; it pervades uniformly throughout it; it forms an integral part of the stupendous faculty known as intelligence, erudition and wisdom. That is, the Atma gives the Buddhi its glorious virtues and qualities. It gives it its exalted stature that is so much in demand and sought after by all. But the irony is that the Buddhi is not aware of its presence and importance (i.e. the intellect, rationality and discrimination of a creature does not know that all its glorious virtues that makes it so renowned and famous, so important, significant and vital, so unique and one of its kind, so powerful and majestic, is because of the Atma residing inherently in it).

[Left to its self, the Buddhi would not be able to do anything at all like its other peers—the water, wind, sky and Tej. The creature thinks that it is very intelligent, erudite and wise, but it forgets that the mind and intellect are an integral part of the brain which itself is a part of the body that is perishable, while the quality that is represented by the intellect, i.e. the power and ability to think logically, coherently and cogently, to be able to discriminate between good and the bad, to deduce and interpret a set of data intelligently, are all eternal and everlasting qualities of creation. Therefore it cannot be the quality of the intellect, which is part of the brain, because the latter is perishable along with the body of the creature. So, it is the Atma that lives inherently inside the intellect and lends it its stupendous potentials and glories that are so much lauded in the form of Buddhi, because the Atma is eternal and everlasting like these virtues exhibited by the intellect.]

The 'Ahankar' (the sense of ego and pride that a creature possesses) is its (Atma's) body; it is the Atma that gives any credence to these qualities in a creature and makes it feel proud and haughty. [That is, it is the vital forces and potentials of the Atma which enables the creature to accomplish certain goals that entitles it to be proud of its accomplishments.] But the irony is that Ahankar is not aware of its presence and importance.

[That is, the proud creature is not aware of this fact and thinks that all its achievements are due to its own efforts, and it is he who deserves the glory and praise. This is what is meant when it is said that Ahankar is the body of the Atma. It is the Atma that gives the quality known as Ahankar or ego, pride, haughtiness and arrogance its value and significance. In other words, it is the Atma living inside the man as his 'consciousness' that enables him to accomplish great tasks for which he feels so proud. Had it not been for the Atma, the man would not have been able to do anything. So actually this Atma is the driving force for the Ahankar that a man has. A dead man has no Ahankar.]

The 'Chitta' of a creature (the memory and sub-conscious mind; understanding and attention; the faculty of reasoning and thought) is its (Atma's) body; it is uniformly present, integrally and inherently, in the virtue known as Chitta of a creature (enabling the latter to exhibit the stupendous abilities so typical of Chitta). But the irony is that the Chitta is not aware of it (i.e. the Chitta does not know that all its glorious potentials and powers are not of its own but due to the Atma inherent in it; the 'soul and strength' of Chitta is the Atma which is subtly present in it and which lends the former its glorious virtues).

[The creature thinks that it is very wise and can remember, recollect and focus its attention on any subject out of its sweet free will and on its own accord. But it errs in it. Because the creature is not able to do anything independently on its own if it was not for the Atma present in its heart and mind, which together constitute the faculty known as Chitta that enables and entitles the creature to exhibit all functions which come under the ambit of Chitta.]

The 'Abyakta' (literally meaning that which cannot be defined, described and spoken about; that which is not manifest and evident; that which is invisible and imperceptible) is its (Atma's) body. It subtly and inherently resides in the body of the Abyakta; it is an integral part of Abyakta.

[That is, the Atma is the consciousness that is an integral part of the supreme and transcendental Being called Abyakta; the latter assumes its importance and significance because it has stupendous potentials due to the Atma being subtly present in it, though this Abyakta is not evident and visible. Anything that is not immediately visible is hard to believe in, but this Abyakta cannot be ignored for its authority and majesty because of the Atma that is inherently present in it. In this verse, the word 'Abyakta' refers to the macrocosmic subtle forces of Nature that control the entire creation though they are not visible in the conventional terms. These forces are so subtle that they cannot be physically verified and described in conventional terms, but are nevertheless very much there and playing a controlling role in creation.]

But the irony is that the Abyakta is not aware of its (Atma's) presence and role in its existence and glory (i.e. the Abyakta does not know that all its glorious potentials and powers are not of its own but due to the Atma inherent in it; the 'soul and strength' of Abyakta is the Atma which is subtly present in it and which lends the former its virtues and glories).

[That is, all that is un-manifest but unequivocally present in all its splendour and glory, all the invisible forces of Nature and the unknown constituents of the deep recesses of the fathomless cosmos which are collectively called Abyakta, all of them have their importance and significance because of the Atma or the truthful consciousness which pervades throughout the cosmos and its constituent Nature.]

The 'Akshar'¹ (literally meaning that which is imperishable, immortal and not subject to decay and destruction; it also means the 'word' that was at the beginning of the creation and is considered as eternal) is Atma's body. The Atma is inherently and integrally present in the Akshar (i.e. all that which is imperishable and immortal in this creation has Atma in it that lends it its immortality and permanence; it is the Atma that makes the entity acquire its importance as one that does not decay and die in the otherwise perishable and decayable world where nothing is permanent except the Atma). But the irony is that the Akshar is not aware of its (Atma's) presence and the role that it

(Atma) plays in its permanent existence and glory (i.e. the Akshar does not know that all its glorious potentials and magnificent powers to remain immortal and imperishable are not of its own but due to the Atma inherent in it; the 'soul and strength' of the Akshar is the Atma which is subtly present in it and which lends the former its divine, sublime virtues and glories).

The 'Mrityu' (death personified) is its (Atma's) body; the Atma is subtly and inherently present in death as its integral power and strength.

[That is, the forces of Nature that bring about the end (death) of anything are powered by the same hidden entity that appears to overcome those forces that resist death. This superior force is personified as the God of death, called Mrityu. Just like any God, this Mrityu has the Atma at its core, and it is this Atma that empowers Mrityu to carry out its functions. When anybody dies, it is his gross physical body that dies, but the immortal Atma continues to 'live' even in the form of death as the latter is also one of its forms. Another interpretation is that it is the Atma that lends the death its powers and potentials and authority to cause death of anybody. Without the strength of the Atma, death would not be able to kill anyone. Therefore, the 'death' derives its powers to kill because it has the powerful authority called the Atma residing in it that empowers it to do so.]

But the irony is that the 'death' is unaware of the Atma's presence and importance in lending the death its capabilities.

[That is, the death is unaware that it is the Atma which is the driving force behind its potentials to kill and bring to an end even the exalted Gods. It is the Atma that entitles and empowers 'death' to kill and conclude this creation. Taken differently, it means that the creature is afraid of death only as long as it thinks that the body is its identity. But as soon as it realises that the Atma, which is its truthful identity, is the same as the one that lives in the entity known as 'death', all its fears of death vanish, because at the time of death the creature would be simply changing its body from one form to another; it would be leaving its former body as a particular creature and entering the new body after death. It would not 'die' as such because the Atma is immortal and eternal.]

The Atma, with the mystical and magical virtues and qualities described in this verse, is an integral, inherent and intrinsic aspect or part of all creatures. It is sinless, immaculate, uncorrupt and pristine pure. It is divine, ethereal, holy and glorious. It is majestic, stupendous and magnificent. It is one and only of its kind. It is indeed and verily called Narayan. [1]

[Note—¹If the word 'Akshar' is taken to mean the 'eternal cosmic word', which in the context of the Upanishads is the universal word OM, then the same logic can be extended to it. That is, the divine and ethereal word OM acquires its potentials and glorious virtues because of the cosmic Soul or Atma represented by the cosmic consciousness that is present in it. Otherwise, it would be simply a combination of letters, and nothing more.

This canto is very similarly to other cantos of this Upanishad, e.g. cantos 3, 5 and 8. All describe the stupendous and glorious virtues of the Atma.]

2. This knowledge was revealed to an ancient Brahmin named Apant Ratam. The latter imparted it to Brahma, the creator, and it was subsequently passed on by him to sage Ghoranghiras. From him it came down to sage Raikwa; from the latter it came to Ram. Thence it was preached by him to all the creatures of the world. The profound

axioms and maxims that constitute the body of this great and sublime knowledge is the path leading to ultimate emancipation and salvation, called 'Nirvan', of a creature. This is the great tenet expounded and postulated by the Vedas; this is the teaching of the Vedas; this is the essence of the canons of the Vedas. [2]

Canto 8

[This canto briefly postulates that the body, in which the Atma resides as an all-important inhabitant living in the heart, is a temporary habitat of the Atma because the body is itself temporary and perishable. On the contrary, the Atma is eternal and imperishable. This Atma is viewed by enlightened people as an embodiment of bliss and tranquility.]

1. The Atma that comfortably resides in the deep recesses of the cavernous heart, is immaculate, pure and uncorrupt. The body is a composite of marrow, flesh and blood. It is very temporary and transient, subject to imminent and unpredictable decay and destruction. It is like a cinema being played out on a canvas or a wall. All its enthralling attractions and fascinating charms are only delusions like the magnificent beauty of the city of Gandharvas¹. It has no substance, depth and pith like the stem of a banana tree which has no hard and sturdy strength in it. It (the body) is just like a bubble of water which is fickle, transient and unstable.

But the Atma is independent of the body and its inherent limitations (though the Atma resides in it). This Atma, *inter alia*, has the following attributes—it is an entity that is beyond thoughts, imagination and understanding; it is divine, eclectic, ethereal, holy, radiant, glorious and majestic; it is the Lord who has no company and peer (it is the unquestioned emperor of the realm and has no match); it is pure, immaculate and pristine; it is an embodiment of 'Tej' (divine light, radiance, splendour, dazzle, majesty, glory, vitality, potentials, strength and energy); it has no physical or subtle attributes such as having any forms, shapes, contours, colours, size and qualities; it is the undisputed Lord God of all that exists; it is beyond the purview of the mind and the intellect; and it has no 'body' of its own.

[On the face of it, this statement seems to contradict Canto 7 which enumerates a number of entities that are regarded as the 'body' of the Atma. But on close examination we observe that none of them is the Atma's specific body. They are all equally treated by the Atma to reside in; it has no preference for one over the other. Had any one of them been the Atma's so-called 'own' body, it would have endeared it and given priority to it. They are merely like temporary inns for the Atma during its sojourn in this life till the time of final merger with its parent body, the cosmic consciousness known as Brahm. Just like an itinerant traveler can't claim property rights over any of the rooms in the hotels he stayed during his travels, the Atma too does not own any of the so-called forms or bodies in which it stayed while undertaking the journey in this world. Once the Atma moves out of a particular form (a body), all relationships cease to exist. They matter only till the time the Atma resides in any of the bodies.]

This Atma, which is ensconced in the cave-like heart of the creature, is like the ambrosia of beatitude and felicity, of happiness and joy, called Amrit. It is glorious and divine, and magnificently radiant and splendorous. Those who are wise, scholarly, erudite

and sagacious look at it, or view it as an embodiment and fount of bliss, happiness and peace. When everything dissolves in the ocean of peace, bliss and happiness, they see nothing beyond it (i.e. they feel sufficiently contented and fulfilled that they need not look anywhere else for comfort and solace once they have realised the truth about the Atma)². [1].

[Note—¹The *Gandharvas* are mythological musicians of the Gods. They live in decorated cities and also deck themselves up in all finery like stage players. They conjure up fascinating scenes to entertain the Gods. Therefore, they are used as a metaphor to describe anything that is not real but looks very charming and attractive from the outside, because they create magic a spell of unimaginable beauty, pomp and grandeur when they perform in the heaven. All their creation are temporary and last only till the time the theatre is being played; as soon as the show is over, they wind up everything and vanish from sight. So, philosophically, this body and the world are compared to them and their cities because of the similarity of attractiveness of the illusions created, and the transience and impermanence of both.

They are mentioned in Yajur Veda, 18/38. The word Gandharva refers to their special characteristic of being very merry and joyous, and fond of sweet fragrances (Jaimini Upanishad Brahman, 3/5/6/4). They are very lustful, lascivious, passionate and promiscuous; they like the company of females, such as celestial damsels called Apsaras (Shatpath Brahman, 9/4/1/4). They have been assigned the duty of protection of Som, the divine drink of the Gods (Shatpath Brahman, 3/6/2/9).

They are celestial musicians and belong to a class of lower rung semi-Gods who lived in the company of celestial damsels, called Apsaras, who danced for the entertainment of the Gods, who guarded the ambrosia of eternity and bliss, called Amrit, who were experts in treating various diseases, who were able to exercise mystical control over women and held them under their spell and charm, who sometimes tormented humans in the guise of some evil spirit, and who were great experts in the art and skill of playing music of all kinds.

The word 'Gandharva' has other connotations also—it refers to those Gods who had the face of a horse or a deer; that Atma which has left one body and acquired another one; a tribe whose are professional singers and whose girls are professional prostitutes; the second husband of a widow who has remarried.

²They see and come to the realisation that in the final analysis, the ultimate salvation and emancipation lies in the beatitude and felicity that one gets when one discards all his delusions about this body and the world, and realises the fact that his true identity is the pure consciousness known as the Atma, his truthful residence is in the Atma. This fills the seeker with eternal peace and bliss and contentedness which are equivalent to his obtaining liberation from the troubling shackles of this gross and perishable body in which the Atma is trapped. This delivers him from all his spiritual bondages. This is tantamount to Moksha or obtaining liberation and deliverance of the soul].

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4. (d) **The Brihad Aranyak Upanishad:--**

(Canto 1, Brahman 1-2, 4-5; Canto 6, Brahman 4)-

Canto 1/Brahman 1

[The first Brahman uses the metaphor of the sacrificial horse whose entire body and its individual parts are symbolic of each and every single unit of the visible creation as it came into being at the time of creation when the creator had performed the cosmic fire-sacrifice to initiate the process of creation. The word 'Ashwa' meaning a horse stands for such virtues as speed and energy, vitality and strength, agility and steadfastness. The word for a sacrificial ritual is 'Medhya', wherein this horse is sacrificed for achieving some great objective. This sacrifice does not mean killing of an animal as such, but to harness the sublime and subtle qualities present latently and inherently in the cosmos for the benefit of its creatures. In other words, the creator had utilised the auspicious and sublime virtues of consciousness, life-giving energy, vitality, strength, agility, speed and steadfastness that were intrinsically present in the primordial cosmic jelly to mould a vast creation. The sacrifice that he did was only a symbolic one to harness and utilise these virtues in a coordinated manner and put them to a purposeful use. It must be noted that a lot of symbolism is used here.]

1. OM salutations! The Usha (dawn, daybreak hours; the time of the sun rise) is symbolic of the head of the Sacrificial Horse which is a personification of all the auspicious virtues and qualities present in creation.

[The sun-rise is a metaphor for the emergence of the hitherto dormant cosmic energy, vitality and strength, as well as the light of self-luminous consciousness having wisdom, erudition and enlightenment as its inherent virtue, that pervades throughout the creation, pulsating and flowing through it, but which was lying dormant and hidden in the darkness of night prior to the rise of the sun. This darkness signifies the ignorance and delusions that engulf the entire creation just like the dark shroud of night.]

The Sun is its eye; the Wind/Air element is its Pran (breath); the Vaishwanar Agni (the celestial all-pervading fire element in creation; the Fire God) is its open mouth; the Samwatsar (a period of twelve months; a period of one full year) is its Atma (the soul, the truthful identity); the Duloka (heavens where Gods reside) is its back; the Antariksha (the entire void of space between the heavens and the earth) is its stomach/abdomen; the Prithivi (the earth) is its pedestal; the Dishas (the Northern and Southern hemispheres of the celestial globe; the four directions—north, east, south and west) are its two sides or flanks (the left and the right; the anterior and the posterior); the Avantar (the angular directions –north east, south east, south west and north west) are its ribs; the Ritus (seasons) are the various parts of its body; the Months and their Lunar cycles are its joints (such as ankles, knees, elbows, wrists, finger joints and toe joints etc.); the Night and Day are its Pratistha (established glory, majesty, grandeur, dignity, esteem and visible fame represented by the legs, because the legs help one to stand up and be counted; they act as the pedestal or a flagstaff upon which the glory of someone stands); the different

Nakshatras (stars and planets) are its bones; the Clouds in the sky represent its flesh; the Sikta (literally 'sand' and other coarse powdered matter, but here meaning sub-particles that have not yet formed into proper materials of the creation) is the half-digested, pre-faecal matter present in its stomach; the Rivers represent its veins and nerves; the Hills and Mountains are its liver (because they produce minerals dissolved in water of the rivers flowing down their slopes, and they harbour forests producing herbs; like the liver in the body, they help to clean the atmosphere of poisonous gases and other toxic substances) and heart (because the trees 'breathe' life by consuming carbon-dioxide and giving out oxygen), the Herbs and Vegetations are the hairs on its body, the Rising Sun symbolises its body above the navel, while the Declining Sun (about to set) symbolises the lower part of its body; the streak of Electric (lightening in the sky) is like its yawning; the Rumbling and Thundering of the dark Cloud is like the shaking or fluttering of its body; the Rain symbolises the passing of its urine; and its Neighing is the speech or the spoken sound or word (1).

[Note :- This 'sacrificial horse' is visualised as the macrocosmic form of the Viraat Purush. The creator, Prajapati Brahma, mentally did a fire-sacrifice to start the process of creation. The fire-sacrifice in which a horse is the sacrificial offering is called an 'Ashwamedh Yagya'. Symbolism is extensively used here to imagine the entire creation to be present in that horse. Since Prajapati had performed, albeit mentally, this sacrifice to kindle or ignite the stupendous forces that set in motion the chain of creation in motion, the horse-sacrifice is considered the greatest endeavour for those persons who aspire to achieve glory, fame, majesty and supremacy which are equivalent to that possessed by Brahma who had done such a sacrifice that enabled him to create an entire creation from virtually nothing. This section describes the process of creation in a symbolic way. This horse is not an animal as such, but is a symbol of the Viraat Purush who has manifested himself as each individual creature of this vast creation.]

2. The 'day' emerged first representing the Mahima (glory, fame, majesty, greatness, grandeur, importance, magnitude, dignity and magnificence) of this cosmic Ashwa (horse) that symbolised the Viraat Purush (the supreme Lord symbolising the macrocosmic gross body of creation). To the east of this Ashwa (represented by the rising sun) is the womb-like ocean (from which the sun appears to rise at dawn). The 'night' appeared as the second Mahima of this Ashwa, and there is an ocean to the west of it (where the sun appears to set)¹.

This macrocosmic Viraat Lord represented by the sacrificial horse carried the Gods in his form known as 'Haye', the Gandharvas (semi Gods who are celestial musicians and considered to be junior to the main Gods) in its form as 'Vaaji', the non-Gods (called the Asurs or the demons) in its form known as 'Arwaa', and the humans in its form known as 'Ashwa'².

The ocean (representing the primary cosmic water element) is like its kith and kin, and it is like the cosmic womb from where this horse originated³. (2).

[Note—(a) ¹These 'two oceans' represent the water element of creation in which the entire creation was conceived and moulded, because water is an essential requirement for conception of life and its sustenance. No life is possible without water. Even today, scientists search for signs of water in far off planets when they search for life there. This is the reason why Lord Vishnu, the macrocosmic manifestation of Brahm and a

personification of the Viraat Purush according to the Purans, reclines on the Kshir Sagar, which is the celestial ocean of milk. The entire creation has been revealed from this Viraat, and his reclining on the surface of the ocean is a symbolic representation of the cosmic primordial liquid from which the creation came into being. Further, the 'day' represents the auspicious and noble virtues in creation, the qualities that are marked by the light of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment which show the correct path to the creatures in this creation, while 'night' stands for ignorance and delusions, lack of knowledge and awareness. These two opposite qualities are both present in creation, and this fact is symbolised by saying that day and night represented the two Mahimas of this cosmic Ashwa.

²All these words—Haye, Vaaji, Arwaa and Ashwa—mean a horse, but they have subtle differences in meaning. 'Haye' refers to decline and decimation of worldly attractions and attachments. So those who have these virtues are equivalent to Gods, and they are borne by the Lord as revered Gods. 'Vaaji' refers to those medicinal plants that bestow vigour and vitality to enable the person to enjoy worldly pleasures and indulge in sensual gratification. The Lord has to bear even such elements in creation. The word 'Arwaa' indicates the quality of being aggressive and mischievous, which are possessed by the demons, and since they are also part of this creation, the Lord has also to bear them. Finally, 'Ashwa' refers to someone who eats a lot, as is evident from the fact that horses eat a lot and can even digest what they eat. This quality is possessed by humans and animals—they are inveterate eaters. So the Lord had to carry such eating fiends also as part of the baggage of creation.

³That is, the primary water element represented by the ocean is so elementary for this creation that it is like the near family of the Viraat, and since this Viraat himself had its origin in the cosmic primordial jelly that existed at the time of creation, this symbolic ocean is likened to the cosmic womb from where everything that exists originated.

(b) Since the narrative revolves around the symbolic horse-sacrifice, it is pertinent to note their significance here. Two pots are kept for various sacrificial rituals—one made of gold is put in the front, and the other of silver is put at the rear of the horse. The pot that is kept behind the horse is made of silver representing the bright light of the full moon, which in turn represents night, while the one in the front is golden representing the brilliant light of the midday sun, representing day. This verse has a lot of symbolism.

The placement of the two pots, gold and silver, indicates that the best of materials available in existence are used to honour the Viraat in the form of the sacrificial horse. The golden pot is a metaphor for the sun because of its shining, bright yellow colour, and therefore of the rising of the day, while the silver pot stands for the white colour of the moon, and therefore of the night.

These two pots represent the two aspects of doing a sacrifice, one standing for the ignorance and delusions that existed before the sacrifice as represented by the pot behind the horse and symbolising the darkness of a night, and the other pot put in front of the horse stands for the light of the day which represents the good name, glory, fame and majesty obtained as a result of enlightenment and self-realisation that should be the main object of any religious pursuit.

The sun symbolising the light of enlightenment and knowledge rises from the bowl of darkness of night symbolising ignorance and delusions. This establishes the fact that though the creature appears to be ignorant and deluded, the light of enlightenment, wisdom and self-awareness is inherently present in it though it might lie in a dormant form.

These two pots are filled with water representing the ocean mentioned in this verse. The presence of the ocean symbolises the primordial cosmic fluid from which the Viraat emerged, and in which the creation would finally dissolve. Therefore, this metaphoric

ocean preceded the day and proceeded the sunset. The ocean is treated as a 'Yoni', literally a womb, because it is in the womb that the embryo develops and nourished, and from where it finally emerges as a living creature, here represented by the horse. The ocean represents the cosmic primordial fluid that sustained and nourished the cosmic embryo, called the Hiranyagarbha, until it emerged as the Viraat Purush. At the micro level, this Viraat became the individual creature. And according to this Upanishad, this Viraat was represented as the horse. The Viraat Purush is imagined in the body of the sacrificial horse. The entire world, the visible creation, is imagined as its various parts in their fundamental forms. Since the Viraat 'carries or bears' the burden of the creation created by the creator Brahma, because the former (Viraat Purush as Vishnu) is a sustainer, nourisher and protector of the creation, it is very apt that he is likened to a 'horse' which carries the burden on its back and helps the rider to reach his destination. Viraat Purush's or Lord Vishnu's form as a horse is known as 'Hayagriv', literally the one with a horse-like neck. Perhaps the sea horse is a symbolic remnant of that cosmic Hayagriv.]

Canto 1/Brahman 2

1. [This Brahman describes the genesis of the various elements of creation. The supreme transcendental Lord desired to withdraw his tentacles which he had spread earlier in the form of this creation. This desire in him can be likened to the 'hunger' element, as any form of desire and wish is tantamount to hunger, because then the person who has this desire endeavours to take action in order to satisfy his hunger for the thing desired. As a result of this cosmic desire, 'death' resulted because when everything was withdrawn, there was no activity and signs of life left, and the state of inactivity is tantamount to death. When the Lord decided to restart this creation, he simply unfolded his tentacles, and the cycle of creation was set in motion. Therefore, in effect, it is an oscillating cycle of birth, death and rebirth.]

In the beginning there was nothing here (i.e. there was a complete void; there was no life). Everything was covered or enveloped with 'Mrityu' or a death-like lifelessness or inactivity; everything was engulfed in 'Ashanaaye' (hunger). Ashanaaye is equivalent to Mrityu¹. It (the primordial primary eternal transcendental entity that existed even before the creation came into being, and it was in this entity that the previous creation had collapsed at the time of its doomsday)² had a 'Mana' (a thought that occurred to it)³ that it should have an Atma (i.e. it thought 'let me have a conscious life')⁴.

For that purpose (i.e. in order to fulfill its desire to have an Atma signifying life), it offered a ceremonial worship. For the purpose of this worship, water was needed because water is sipped during religious worship, and so that transcendental entity made an effort to create 'Apaha' or the water element⁵.

'I have got 'K'⁶ (क the seed or root word indicating water or liquid) while doing this ceremonial worship. Hence, this is the essence of life called 'Arka'. The word Arka means mother tincture, or the raw extract or juice of anything.'

Since this Apaha gave immense satisfaction in the sense that the worship was successfully completed (otherwise no water element would have come into being), and the fact that this achievement set in motion the chain of events that led to the establishment of life in this creation, this 'essence' or Arka of life present in the water element was deemed to be the Fire element⁷.

A person who realises or understands the sublime and subtle importance and significance of this Arka (essence of life) is able to acquire certain happiness and contentedness (1).

[Note :-¹The word 'Ashanaaye' means a desire or need for food; it also refers to hunger. When one is hungry, he kills for food, he goes out to hunt for food, or even kills another person to feed his own stomach if that another person appears to stand between the hungry man and the food.

The wider connotation of this word covers any kind of yearnings and greed, any overwhelming passions and ambitions that might make a man blind to everything else, which virtually eclipses his wisdom and judgment, and impels him to recklessly pursue his objectives and go for the kill to accomplish success in his objective, oblivious of the consequences. Figuratively speaking therefore, hunger is tantamount to death because all such noble virtues such as wisdom and reasoning, fortitude and equanimity, tolerance and self restraint etc. are totally eclipsed, and a life without virtues and values and principles is as good as dead. Hence, hunger is tantamount to death, specially 'death of wisdom and intellect' that advises a person to follow righteousness and auspiciousness instead of blindingly hankering for worldly gains.

Another interpretation of the word hunger as being synonymous with death is that if hunger is not satisfied, it leads to death. During famines, large numbers of people die due to hunger.

²Principles of science state that matter and energy do not end but only changes their forms. When the creation apparently 'ends', it only goes into a hibernating mode, and when the time is conducive, it virtually yawns and comes back to life. The primary cosmic energy that drives the dynamo of the creation does not die or dissipate as such, but only becomes latent and dormant like fire which is inherently present in a dormant form in the fire wood, only to leap up when ignited. The spark that ignited this cosmic fire of creation was the 'desire or wish' in that primary transcendental entity known as Brahm to create and have a life in the form of an Atma or the conscious factor. This 'desire' led to the extinguishing of the creation in its previous version, but that earlier desire was the result of overwhelming worldly passions and greed, leading to death. When a man acquires any material gain, his desires do not end there, but this success fuels his fire for more material gains, and this makes him blind towards what is righteous and what is unrighteous, thereby leading to his ultimate downfall symbolised by death. But the 'desire' referred to at the time of new creation was an auspicious one because it was like a man repenting for his sins and misdemeanors, and then his desires to be given a new opportunity to do right and auspicious things. It is another matter that by and by he forgets his resolutions and reverts back to his bad old habits, which lead to the end of this new creation when the time comes. This simple illustration explains why we have an endless cycle of birth and death.

So the eternal, imperishable, transcendental, self-capable, self-illuminated, and self-sustaining primary force of Nature that never dies any death as the word is understood to mean, is known as Brahm, and it survives the conventional way the creation comes to an

end at the time of doomsday. It is in this primary entity known as the Brahm that the creation collapses at that time, only to be revived when that entity desires to do so.

³The first thing that came into being before the rest of the gross creation came into existence was 'Mana' or the mind, because it is the mind that can think of any thing and have any desire; without mind no intelligent and creative activity such as creation of the world is possible. Since the mind has no physical form as it existed only as a 'desire or wish' in that primary entity, it is called the subtle body of creation. This Mana had two components—the mind which had the desire, and its superior component the intellect which found the means to implement that desire by intelligent use of the available ingredients to initiate the complex process of creation. To illustrate, an intelligent man, when given a task, would go about it by properly utilizing the available resources and putting them to an optimum use. So the mind decided to do a sacrifice which is like saying it endeavored to fulfill the desire in the supreme entity by initiating some experiment in a laboratory to obtain success in fulfilling this desire to create life.

⁴Life is synonymous with consciousness present in a creature. This 'consciousness' is called Atma, and that is why life and Atma are synonymous with each other. To illustrate, suppose a man is breathing and therefore technically alive, but is lying in a deep state of coma when all his conscious functions are as good as dead. We call this man 'as being good as dead' because his consciousness is non-functional.

⁵The first element that came into being as result of this cosmic experiment was 'water element'. Even today scientists look for traces of water, and nothing else, to establish the presence of life in distant planets. So this water was the harbinger of cosmic life. But water is in itself inert and cold, whereas life is symbolised by warmth and vibrancy represented by the fire element.

The 'ocean' mentioned in canto 1/Brahman 1, and the 'Apaha' or Arka mentioned in this verse here are both indicative of the basic necessity of life after death, which is water. Without water, no new life can ever be expected to emerge after death. Water is the primary and basic necessity for life. After the deluge of the doomsday, when new life makes its appearance on the planet or anywhere else in the cosmos, the basic ingredient needed for it is water. When scientists of modern day search for life in the far corners of the universe, in far away stars for instance, they search for signs of water first.

⁶The letter 'K' (क) is the first consonant in the Sanskrit alphabet. Hence it is used as an acronym for water, a symbol for water, because water was the first element created. 'K' also means happiness, contentedness and comfort. Hence, realizing that the prayers to acquire life in its basic ingredient, known as the Atma, have been fruitful, Prajapati Brahma felt happy, contented and comforted.

⁷It is in this water that 'life' takes shape. Water is inherently cool, while life needs energy and warmth, which in turn is a metaphor for the 'fire' element. Hence, though apparently cool and an antidote to fire, water harbors life in its bosom in a latent form, which in turn means that it has the fire element concealed in its bosom in a latent form because life cannot be sustained without warmth, heat and energy, which are all the various terms used to describe the Fire element.

So the 'fire element' remains concealed in the water element as its fundamental life-giving and life-sustaining factor. In other words, fire is inherently present in water in a latent and dormant form; it lends water its vitality and strength to conceive and sustain life. It is obvious because it is observed that even when the ocean is frigid cold on the surface and a thick layer of ice floats on its surface, a vibrant marine life thrives underneath that cold surface. Life cannot exist without warmth, and had it not been for the presence of the fire element inherently in the water element, no life would have

survived below a thick coat of ice that floats on the surface of the ocean at some places on earth.]

2. [This verse describes the evolution of earth and fire from the primordial fluid known as 'water' or 'Apaha' which was the essence or 'Arka' of life.] 'Apaha' (water) is 'Arka' (the extract, juice or essence of life). The gross parts (sediments, the metals and other trace element dissolved in it, the coarser particles) of that primordial water (the primary fluid of life) accumulated on its surface and they became solidified in the form of earth. When 'earth' was produced or formed in the manner described herein, the great effort that was made and the severe exertion that the cosmic creator had undergone manifested themselves as the 'fire' element on the surface of this earth (2).

[Note :- Prajapati Brahma, the creator of the visible world, when he wished to create, had the cosmic primordial fluid or water as the only raw material to start with. He churned it vigorously, like done when milk is churned to produce butter which floats on the top. This solid part formed the earth. That is why in the Purans, the celestial ocean upon which Lord Vishnu is depicted to be reclining on the bedstead made of the coiled legendary python called Sheshnath, is known as 'Kshir Sagar', literally meaning 'the ocean of milk' because this vigorous cosmic churning created so much froth that the primordial liquid appeared to be as white as milk.

In another scenario, the milk-like primordial, primary cosmic fluid was aloud to coagulate, and the solidified parts formed the earth which literally floated on the ocean of the primary cosmic liquid. That is why the earth constitutes only a fraction of the water present in visible creation that we observe on this planet of ours.

This diligent exercise made the creator tired, so he slept like he was 'dead'. During his tiredness-induced weary sleep, he ejaculated his 'Tej' or his vital energy in the form of the cosmic semen, which in turn transformed itself into 'fire'. In modern parlance, we may regard this Tej as the vital spark that sets off any chain reaction in a nuclear reactor, or any other chemical reaction that any student of science is aware of.

Refer Canto 5, Brahman 5 in this context.]

3. He (the cosmic creator) divided or cleaved himself into three parts (like a single cell Amoeba or Paramecium or Bacteria cleaving or dividing itself into two parts to produce an image of its own self). One part was transformed into 'Aditya' (the celestial Sun), one part became 'Vayu' (the wind or air), and the third part became 'Pran' (the vital breath; the life giving wind; the spark of life, vitality, vigour, strength and energy).

[Now the Upanishadic sage describes the Viraat Purush, literally the vast, colossus, all-encompassing and all-pervading macrocosmic form of the supreme transcendental Lord, who formed the gross body of this entire creation. This Viraat is the cosmic Lord in the form of Vishnu who reclines on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk known as Kshir Sagar.]

The eastern direction represented the head of that cosmic creator (the Viraat Purush); the two angular directions such as the Ishan and Agneya (i.e. the north-east side and the south-east side respectively) are its fore-arms; the western direction represents its hind part called the tail end (i.e. the appendix); while the two directions called Vayabya and Nairitya (i.e. the north-west side and the south-west side respectively) are its hind-legs or the thighs. The south and north directions are its two flanks or sides; the Duloka

(heavens) is its back (the upper part of the body); the Antariksha (the space of the sky above the earth) is its abdomen or stomach; and the earth is its heart.

This Viraat (vast, colossus, all-incorporating and all-inclusive) form of the creator's cosmic body rests in the water element of creation. A person who (is wise, erudite, scholarly and enlightened enough) knows this gets respect and honour wherever he goes (3).

[Note :- The primordial, primary egg is also known as 'Hiranyagarbha', literally, the golden cosmic egg. From it evolved the Viraat Purush. These words signify the initial stages of the creation of the universe at the macro level. They are therefore employed for Lord Vishnu as well as for Brahma in the Purans. The word Prajapati means the husband or guardian of creation, or from whom the subjects of creation were produced and who sustains and nourishes them. Even as child's existence is because of the vital spark of life provided by the father's sperm, but the actual development of the embryo takes place inside a mother's womb and nourished by her body fluids, the gross body of the Viraat was nourished by the cosmic fluid in the womb of the cosmic mother, called Mother Nature, which was the female aspect of the supreme, transcendental authority known as Brahm. The Hiranyagarbha was the subtle body of this setup; the Viraat was the gross body, while the Ishwar or the supreme Lord was the causal body because it was Ishwar who was the cause of all this to come into being. The Atma which resided in this causal body, i.e. the soul of the creation, is known as Brahm.

Mythology gives different versions of how creation came into being. Without going into specifics, the broad outline remains the same in all versions. The differences in detail are because the different sages and seers had visualised the whole process in their minds and had interpreted them in their own way, giving rise to differences in opinions and views. Even in our modern times, various theories of science go on getting changed and updated when new discoveries are made, so much so that often well established facts come tumbling down in the face of newer discoveries. Knowledge that evolves and which is not stagnant has freshness and vitality as compared to rigid, staid models which cannot be discussed and are not supposed to change with the evolution of time. Life itself means something going forward, something moving, something perpetually changing, incorporating and assimilating all the changes that occur in the course of its forward movement. Stagnancy is equivalent to death, while vibrancy and flourish are synonyms of life.]

4. [The creation of 'Samvatsar', literally a full year representing one full cycle of birth and death, and 'Vaak' or the faculty of speech, is described here.]

He (the creator or the Viraat Purush) desired that another form of his body be produced¹. [The earlier forms were earth, water, wind/air and sun representing fire.] Hence, that primary entity representing death² in the form of hunger (as explained in verse no. 1 above) created a symbolic union between the Mana (mind and heart) and Vani (the faculty of speech). The 'seed' or the fiery element produced by this union was called 'Samvatsar'. Prior to this, there was no such thing as Samvatsar³ (i.e., there was no fixed time for life to last; there was immortality, eternity and infinity).

That primary being kept that Samvatsar, which was its offspring, in its cosmic womb till the time of its birth arrived. This newly born infant was known as Kaal (death personified). The parent was so hungry that it wished to eat this newly born Kaal⁴, and so it opened its mouth wide to gobble it up⁵. Scared stiff, the infant cried aloud, uttering the words 'Bhan'. This transformed into speech or Vaak (4).

[Note—¹There is another interpretation of this event. Prajapati was lying like a sleeping entity after creating earth and ejaculating fire in the form of his Tej as described in the earlier verse. He represented 'death' because he was lying lifeless in his weary sleep after having ejaculated his vitality in the form of his Tej or semen. So he decided to have a second body, or get re-born, and acquire a new lease of fresh life.

²The creator is likened to death personified, or Mrityu, because he was lying motionless, as if dead, in sleep after the exertion of creation. In his sleep he imagined that the two entities of creation, i.e. the subtle mind and the faculty of speech had an intercourse, resulting in the creation of Samvatsar. When he woke up, he felt so hungry that he wished to eat what was readily available, and so opened the mouth to gobble up this Samvatsar. Terrified, the latter cried aloud, and this was the first manifestation of what would eventually evolve as speech.

³The word Samvatsar refers to one full year. This is a metaphor for one full cycle of birth and death of a creature. A man's life consists of many years or Samvatsars, each a complete unit with all the seasons. These years indicate the numerous lives that a man takes before he finds final rest in the form of death, the latter being a metaphor for final liberation and deliverance of his physical body from the torments that he had been subjected to during his sojourn in this world, as well as for the soul that finds emancipation and salvation by getting rid of this body at the time of death and escaping from its shackling effects.

The symbolic union of the mind and speech is indicative of their coordination and this was necessary to enable the creature to live fruitfully in this world, because without speaking, life would have been very difficult to live in practical terms. The mind enabled the creature to decide what and when to speak. But as it happened, this speech more often than not created such a situation when the creature wasted his vital energy in fruitless chatter, besides causing so much ill-will and animosity due to his inciting and fiery speech that there were strife and hatred all around, resulting in the peaceful and blissful life coming to a symbolic end. Absence of peace and tranquility for the soul was tantamount to its death.

⁴It is pertinent to note here that the word for death, i.e. Kaal, has the letter Ka, and this letter is the seed for the water element as described in verse no.1. That is why it is visualised that at the time of doomsday, there is a deluge caused by heaving ocean or incessant rain that submerges everything.

⁵The imagery reminds one of a she serpent nourishing her eggs. When the eggs hatch, the mother snake gobbles up the wriggling and struggling tiny reptiles as soon as they come out from the hatched egg, because she is very hungry. Only those few infant snakes which manage to slither away out of her reach, are able to escape and survive. A lot of imagination and apparently mixed-up imagery has been used here.

The concept of Samvatsar is also elucidated in Canto 1, Brahman 5, verse no. 14 of this Upanishad.]

5. [Creation of the Vedas, as also of the humans and animals are described here, besides the fact that no matter how many creatures die, the hunger pangs of 'death' are never satiated.]

He (death personified) thought to himself, 'If I kill this terrified infant (Samvatsar born as Kaal) then it will be only a little bit of food (that will not satisfy my hunger)'. Therefore, he desisted from gobbling it up (i.e. Kaal or 'death' escaped from being killed at the time of its creation).

Using his mind and speech, he (the creator) created the rest of the creation which was diverse and multifarious—such as the Vedas consisting of the Rig, the Yajur and the Sam, the various Chandas (which are poetical composition styles used to compose the hymns of the Vedas), Yagya (the religious rituals, especially the fire-sacrifices), Praja (the humans who were the subjects of this creation and who would use the Vedas, composed through the medium of the Chandas, and do Yagyas or fire-sacrifices during which they would offer offerings to the sacrificial fire so that Prajapati could find satisfaction from his hunger), and Pashu (the animals who would serve the humans in this divine effort and would be used by him to serve Prajapati).

Paradoxically, he (the creator personified as sleeping death) wished to eat each of his own creation (as they came into being one by one, in order to satisfy his hunger; see also note of verse no. 4 above). The creator Prajapati, who represented death because he wished to eat each of his own offspring as soon as they were created, was known as Aditi, the Parent of creation. [This Aditi was both the mother of Gods as well as the father of creation.]

The fact (or the inherent and intrinsic virtue or characteristic feature) that ‘it eats everything’ (i.e. that it has the ability to bring to an end what it can create) gives Aditi (the parent of creation) its speciality, its uniqueness that delineates it from the rest of the authorities in creation. It gives it its strength, authority, majesty, powers, importance and significance (that it spares none and can annihilate everything that exists without exceptions)¹.

Anyone who knows about the special quality possessed by this Aditi (parent of creation), which sets it apart from the rest of the creation, is able to enjoy all the benefits offered by the creation (even as the parent enjoys all the benefits that accrue with having a good and obedient family). He is able and entitled to enjoy the fruits of creation and eat everything (because he realises that he is not harming anything, but the material thing and eatable food that has come his way are destined for him, they are meant for his consumption, and he should have no compunctions about using or eating them² (5).

[Note—¹Here, the creator is the immutable, eternal, infinite, almighty, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, supreme and transcendental Lord of creation, known as Ishwar or Brahm, who is one and the only one of his kind though he had been assigned different names—including Aditi and Mrityu—by the scriptures for performing different functions. The entire creation has unfolded from him, and at the end of its tenure it would fold itself back into that same Ishwar. This explains the term death personified used here for the creator, for it is the creator who brings about the end of the creation, and no one else. The authority to conclude and recreate is the exclusive domain and prerogative of Brahm. The allusion to eating everything as soon as it was born is simply a figurative way of saying that everything that comes into existence has a predetermined life span; nothing can exist forever. The creator ensured this so that the offspring does not go out of his hands!]

The creator wants it to exist. As soon as the creator wants, he can put a full stop to this vast creation even without notice. In other words, the creator reserves the right to create and conclude everything as per its wish, and no element of creation can supersede the supreme creator.

We must remember that Prajapati was lying asleep before creation. There was no physical activity, only mental activity. Absence of activity is 'tantamount to death'. The union and intercourse described as Mithun or having sex in verse no. 4 above is also mental; the desire to eat is similarly also mental. An inert and inactive Prajapati lying as if in death mode which prevails after the creation is concluded was indeed death personified. See note to verse no. 3.

Earlier it has already been said that hunger, or its acronym 'greed and desire', is equivalent to death, signifying the fact that one must not have greed or desire because both of them would lead to death. Hunger made Prajapati so mean that he wished to devour his own offspring, Samvatsar or Kaal. Since a parent produces a child in its own likeness, Prajapati, as death personified, produced Samvatsar which is the fixed period or span of life of a creature, at the end of which is death. This is the opposite of being eternal and imperishable. This verse also indicates that even Prajapati Brahma, the creator of the physical visible world, who was born from the eternal Brahm, would also come to an end when his time is up.

Now, Prajapati and the word Aditi mean a guardian or parent respectively. We see that Prajapati is 'a father' because he produces the sperm or 'Beej' or seed. He is also 'the mother' because he nourishes the cosmic egg (embryo) of Samvatsar in his womb till its maturity and emergence as an infant Kaal as described in verse no. 4.

Aditi also stands for the Duloka or the heavens, and the Antariksha or the sky as established by the following Mantra of the Yajur Veda 'vfnfr|kSZjfnfrjUrfj{kefnfr ekZrk l firk' (Yajur Veda, 25/23).

The cosmic egg called Hiranyagarbha was nourished by Prajapati in his womb. This womb was not a physical womb as we understand it to be, but it represented the entire sky or space of the cosmos. In due course of time, the myriad visible parts of the universe that came into being were actually that primordial, primary egg transforming itself into them. Space or heaven has a neuter gender; hence Aditi is neither a male nor a female; it is neither 'he nor she'; it is best described by the pronoun 'it'.

The 'creator' Prajapati started both the beginning as well as the initial process of creation, and then fixed its life span. That is, Prajapati created, then nourished in his womb, gave birth to, and finally concludes his own creation. This special feature sets Prajapati, alias Aditi as well as Mrityu, apart from the rest—he created, he sustained and he even fixed the destiny or death of his own creation. The 'eating of its own offspring' as described in verse nos. 4 and 5, is a metaphor for this process of annihilation of the creation by the creator himself. It is like the case with 'fire'—the fire sustains life, no life is ever possible without the latent presence of fire in this creation, but it is so relentless, unforgiving, uncompromising, ferocious and cruel, that it destroys everything and anything that comes in its contact. Since a parent enjoys the comforts derived from a family, Prajapati Brahma, the old patriarch of creation who was assigned the task of creation by the supreme Brahm, also enjoys the pleasures and comforts derived from his own creation. This creation gives him pleasure, but at the same time he has no compunctions and regrets nothing in bringing it to a conclusion, or literally 'eating it up'.

²That is, a wise and erudite man realises that the supreme Brahm has created everything for a specific purpose—material things are meant to be give comfort to the body, and food is meant to be eaten. If they are not used properly and within their life span, they would decay and perish nevertheless because 'death' of anything that came into existence is a forgone conclusion. There is another twist to this view—the person should also realise at the same time that his own body would meet the same fate, death, and it would also decay and perish one day if not put to good use. This wisdom and realisation would inculcate renunciation and detachment in him; he would then strive to seek the path that can give him eternal life, and this would lead him on to the path of

spiritualism that can bestow eternal bliss and happiness to him. He further realises that he is an image of the supreme Viraat Purush that has the Brahm in his bosom even as the person has the Atma in his own bosom. This profound realisation is the ultimate of Upanishadic teachings.]

6. [Prajapati decided to do a fresh grand sacrificial ritual. His Pran came out of his body and the body began to expand.]

The creator (Prajapati) wished or aspired to do another big religious sacrifice once again. For this purpose, he made great effort and did severe Tapa (austerity, penance and observance of strict vows).

This exercise created 'Yash' (the virtues of majesty, grandeur, fame, reputation, glory, splendour, honour and praises) as well as 'Virya' (the virtues of strength, vitality, stamina, vigour, potent and energy). These two virtues are represented by the 'Pran' element in creation¹.

This Pran attempted to escape from the body of the creator, and as a result the body started to expand (it bloated like a balloon)². But the Mana (i.e. the mind that creates a desire and harbours ambitions) still remained inside the body of the creator³ (6).

[Note :- ¹Pran is that vital force which keeps the various sense organs of perceptions of the body such as the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the skin, as well as the organs of action such as the hands, the legs, the mouth, the excretory and the reproductive, active and working in their prime form. These organs are outwardly inclined because they relate to the outside world. They help to establish a person's fame and glory in this world. A person acquires knowledge through the medium of his sense organs of perception, and this knowledge empowers him with wisdom and skills that give him authority and renown, strength and ability. His actions through the organs of action also help to establish his authority and majesty in this world. Since Pran is the vital life-giving factor in his body, it is deemed that Pran, through these organs, gives him Yash and Virya. It therefore represents a person's fame, majesty, energy and vitality. A live person is of some value for the creation, and not a dead person. All the good name and fame that a person acquires, is because of the Pran living in his body.

²As long as the Pran lives in the body, a person accomplishes so many formidable and daunting tasks, gets so many good honours and is revered by the people, but as soon as the Pran leaves the body, the same person becomes good for nothing. Hence, once the Pran attempted to leave the body of Prajapati, it started to swell in order to contain it. Besides this metaphysical interpretation, there is also another way of looking at this 'swelling of the body' from the view of the physical sciences. According to one of the established theories of creation, there was a 'big bang' in the beginning of creation when the primary elements became so dense that they contracted and contracted until the moment the mass became so dense that its energy exploded. This explosion and the subsequent expansion of the cosmic dust resulting in the formation of the visible creation, and its ultimate collapse into a black hole from where a new creation would evolve, is metaphorically depicted in the swelling of the body of the creator when the Pran, the main life factor of creation, the chief energy of creation, exploded or revealed its potentials of creating and infusing the otherwise inane and lifeless entities with the vital spark of life, and finally merging itself with the supreme Brahm at the time of its emancipation and salvation, only to remerge again during a new phase of creation.

When a person realises that the ‘essence’ or the ‘fire’ that is worth worshipping is the ‘Atma or soul’ of the universe, and it is as glorious as the sun which illuminates all the worlds single handedly, rather it is like the illuminated Atma of the dark universe, the person becomes enlightened, and such a person never fears from the darkness of death. Another interesting point is to use the analogue of the sun as a parallel for the Ashwamedh. The sun is the ball of fire having an approximate life 12 billion years, out of which 4.5 billion years have already passed. It is estimated that during the course of its life, as it consumes its reserve of energy, which we shall call its Pran, it expands or ‘swells’ just like the body of Prajapati. During the last 4.5 billion years of its existence, it has already expanded and become brighter by about 40% from what it was at the beginning. It is projected that in approximately 4.5 or 5.5 billions years from now, the hydrogen fuel of the sun’s core would be exhausted, and it will start burning the gas in its surrounding atmosphere. The core would shrink, but the outer layers would expand or swell rapidly as the sun transforms itself into a red giant. In the course of this outward ballooning of the sun, it would blow away a substantial share of its mass, becoming less dense and therefore exert less gravitational pull on its planets. Meanwhile, the expanding and swelling red giant will become 256 times bigger than what it is today, and 2730 times as bright and hot, scorching everything, especially life on earth, to cinders. The earth will be vaporized into nothingness of the cosmos or pushed away spirally into the deep recesses of space. [This is based on a research work published in monthly notices of the royal astronomical society by two astronomers, Klaus Peter Schroeder of the University of Guanajuato in Mexico and Robbert Cannon Smith of the University of Sussex in England. They used a new technique developed by Schroeder and Manfred Cuntz at the University of Texas in Arlington.]

³But even as a person’s mind remains ever eager to acquire more of anything, it remains attached to anything he loves though that object of his affection has been made available to him in abundance, the mind symbolically remained inside the body when the Pran finally left the body at the time of death. This ‘mind remaining inside the body even when the Pran has left it’ explains why a person takes another birth, because his greed and yearnings, his hopes and expectations, his ambitions and desires still linger on with the mind symbolically remaining inside in him. This mind never lets him lie in peace. That is, although the creator had created so many things, he was still not satisfied as the Mana compelled him to wish for more. This is a metaphoric way of saying that as long as the man has not controlled his mind, he would keep on yearning for more and have endless ambitions, thereby robbing him of his peace and tranquility.]

7. [What did that Prajapati—whose Mana or mind was focused on this body—do? This question is answered in this verse.]

He (the creator Prajapati) wished that his body, which had been swollen and become prominent because of the Pran, should be sanctified and become holy enough to be fit for a religious sacrifice. ‘Let me have such a body’, thought the creator. Therefore, since his body had become swollen, it was called an ‘Ashwa’, literally a horse, and since it was made holy, pure and sanctified, it was called ‘Medhya’ or something that can be offered in a religious sacrifice. This is the essence of the sacrifice known as ‘Ashwa Medh Yagya’, or the sacred horse-sacrifice. A person who knows this fact knows the essential meaning of the sacrifice known as ‘Ashwamedh Yagya’¹.

Now, since Prajapati had planned or wished to do a great horse-sacrifice as described here, he imagined or visualised this sacrificial horse (the

Ashwamedh) as being set free. The horse was allowed to roam free for one year, called the period of Samvatsar, and after that period it was touched and sacrificed². Similarly, other animals were made available for other Gods to offer their sacrifices in the divine ritual. That is why those who do great horse-sacrifices offer an animal which has been duly sanctified and purified by the use of Mantras, and which is deemed to be equivalent to or a representative of all the Gods, including Prajapati³.

The sun is like the sacrificial horse because it shines with radiance and dazzle just like the radiance and glory that the sanctified horse possesses. The radiance, splendour, brilliance and dazzling illumination that the sun possesses is due to the potentials of the fire element present in it. The Samvatsar (one full year of seasons) is its symbolic body (indicating that the entire year should be regarded as holy and not even a day should be wasted in futile pursuits). The fire is its essence (i.e. its most important ingredient that makes the sun so valuable and honourable). And this world is its Atma/soul (because if the world was not there, there was no use for the sun to shine, and no one would be there to either offer worship to the sun or honour its essence, the fire element). Therefore, these two—the burning sun and the burning fire—are the symbolic Ashwa (horse) and Arka (essence of life)⁴ respectively.

Though Ashwa (sacrificial horse) and Arka (essence) have two symbolic forms—viz. the body of the Viraat or creator Prajapati and the Sun as the former, and basic fire element and the light, energy and heat of the sun as the latter, the supreme entity or ‘Devta’ (God) that personifies for death is one and the same⁵.

A person who is wise enough to understand the esoteric, subtle and sublime meaning of what is ‘death’ is able to vanquish it; he becomes potent enough to overcome the cycle of repeated deaths, i.e. he does not have to take birth again and again; death cannot affect him as he goes beyond the purview of death. Rather, he himself becomes a personification of the God who appeared to be death personified so much so that such a person becomes so exalted and enlightened that his stature becomes equivalent to one of these Gods who had joined Prajapati in doing the divine horse-sacrifice⁶ (7).

[Note—¹Here, the divine cause for which the creator Prajapati had offered himself is ‘creation’, and he has offered himself as the ultimate offering in the guise of the sacrificial horse. Hence, the horse used in such rituals is not an ordinary animal, but it represents the creator himself.

²Since Prajapati and the sacrificial horse are symbolically the same entity, the horse that was offered as sacrifice as part of the sacrificial ritual of the fire-sacrifice was tantamount to Prajapati offering his own self to be sacrificed at the ritual. To offer oneself as an offering at a religious sacrifice is the highest form of offering that a person can offer to the supreme Lord; it is the highest category of offering and sacrifice for any cause. For instance, patriot soldiers offered their lives in order to protect their country from invaders. For them, the battle is a religious sacrifice in which they offered themselves.

³Since the entire creation was created by the creator Prajapati Brahma, when he offered himself as an offering, it is natural that all other subjects of his creation emulated

his example and offered themselves for a noble cause. This is a metaphoric way of saying that if the man is righteous and noble, then all his followers and subordinates would also become like him.

⁴Any 'fire' sacrifice revolves around the sacred fire signifying the cosmic energy of creation that is honoured, offered worship and invoked for the benefit of the person who performs the rituals. Without the energy, vitality, vigour, stamina, strength and potent represented by the fire element, no success can be accomplished in this world. The sun is a great repository of the fire element; it is a natural reservoir of the celestial fire.

The horse is the medium through which the horse-sacrifice is done, and the fire is the divine energy that is aspired or hoped to be gained or acquired or accomplished by having successfully completed the sacrifice. Where is the fire permanently located, or which body in creation is evidently a storehouse of the cosmic fire? The obvious answer is the 'Sun' because it is the cauldron that lights up the entire visible universe. Therefore, the sun is the body represented by the sacrificial horse, while the fire is its essence or Arka, its intrinsic quality or virtue for which it is worshipped and honoured. This virtue of the sun that it gives heat and energy to the world and is a receptacle of the fire element makes it equivalent to a sacrificial horse.

Hence the horse is the body of Prajapati the creator, while the Atma in it represents the Pran of that Prajapati. Since the horse is an image of the Viraat or the macrocosmic form of creation, it is also an image of all the different Lokas of which Prajapati is the soul.

Further, it is said that the body of the Sun is Samvatsar. It is true because Samvatsar means a fixed life span, a fixed period of time, and the sun rises at a fixed time and sets at a fixed time. The rising of the sun on a particular day till its setting indicates one full, complete life cycle of a creature, right from its birth till its death.

⁵The supreme transcendental Lord who concludes everything, withdraws the entire creation in himself at the time of this conclusion, and then unfolds it when he so desires, is only one and not two. This 'one' supreme entity is known as Brahm; the rest of the Gods and other aspects of creation are but that Lord's various revelations or forms to carry on with specific functions of creation.

⁶We have seen that the God personified as 'death' is none other than the creator himself. This God is the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic, all-pervading supreme transcendental Lord of creation who had manifested himself as all the creatures of this creation, forming their individual bodies at the micro level of creation. This fact has been expressly stated in those Upanishads that deal with the genesis of creation, such as Aeiteriyo amongst others. At the time of conclusion of this creation, the entire world reverts back into the primary elements from which it was crafted by the creator in the first place, and when the new creation comes into being, these elements regroup and refold the canvas once again. So this allusion to a wise man who understands the basic meaning of death being equivalent to the God who personifies death basically means that such a man has realised that his true identity is not what his physical body makes him out to be but the fundamental essence that forms his core, and it is the supreme transcendental cosmic Atma or soul which is pure consciousness and a manifestation of the supreme Lord, the Viraat. Again, since this Viraat himself is also a macro level manifestation of the supreme Brahm, a wise man realises that he is that Brahm's manifestation at the micro plane. This Brahm is primarily eternal, imperishable and immutable, and therefore the man also deems himself to possess these grand characteristics. Obviously, any entity that is eternal and imperishable is beyond the purview of death.]

Canto 1/Brahman 4

[The previous Brahman no. 3 emphasised the profound and all-round importance and significance of Pran which is the most important factor in creation and is like its essence. Without Pran nothing can ever hope to live and acquire relevance in the creation. It is the most adorable, honourable, magnanimous and a selfless sustainer of all in this creation. It is also a manifestation of Brahm, the invisible enigmatic divine entity that is the cause and essence of all that exists in this creation.

Now, in this Brahman no. 4, the all-pervading nature of Brahm is being described along with the evolution of the physical, visible gross world and its four divisions or classifications. The fruit or reward of all Gyan (scholarship, erudition and knowledge) and Karma (action and deed) is this world, while the enlightenment about the reality (i.e. the falsehood of all this) is the provider of Moksha (liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation) for the soul of the creature. This sublime and eclectic quintessential knowledge about the supreme, transcendental Brahm is called 'Brahm-Vidya'. This Brahman describes the genesis of the gross form of creation called the world. See also chapter 6, Subalo-panishad of this book.]

1. This Atma (the cosmic Soul) was all alone in the form of the Purush (i.e. as the primary creator; the macrocosmic, invisible Male factor of Nature who was present even before the rest of the visible creation came into being; the Viraat Purush). He looked in all the directions but could not see anything besides his own self. So he said, 'Ahamasmi' (i.e. I am). That is why that Purush is defined as having 'Ahankar' or having ego, haughtiness, self importance, self pride, self praise and arrogance. This trait of having 'Ahankar' became an integral characteristic feature of all the creatures when they came into being from that primary Purush at the time of creation.

Further, the word 'I' got associated with this trait of having egotism, self praise, self importance, arrogance and pride (or Ahankar). That is why even today when anyone is called and asked who he is, he starts his reply to identify himself with the word 'I', and then adds his name to it (i.e. he says 'I am Ram, or I am John')¹.

That primary creator (Prajapati) had destroyed (eliminated, vanquished, overcome or burnt) all his sins. That is why he was known as 'Purush'².

A person who knows this fact about this Purush (as the Atma or soul that has vanquished all sorts of sins and negative traits, thereby becoming immaculate and pristine pure) is able to trounce or literally reduce to ashes those who try to prove themselves superior to that Purush³ (1).

[Note—¹The original identity of a creature is his Atma or soul which is an image of the supreme Brahm. So the first part of the identity statement, i.e. 'I' refers to a person's true identity which is his pure conscious self or Atma/soul. Then the second part, i.e. the name assigned to his physical being (body) by his parents, such as Ram or John, refers to his identity with a gross body that is recognised by this world. Further, at the time of creation the Viraat Purush had revealed himself as a man who is a true image of the former.

So once again the true lineage of a person's soul comes from the Viraat Purush and the word 'I' refers to that original parent, the Viraat. The second half of the name, viz. Ram or John, refers to the parents who are responsible for the formation of the gross body of the man, such as his worldly father and mother. That is why the word 'I' is a constant element in all identification statements, because no matter who the person is, his origin is from the same parent, the cosmic creator called the cosmic Purush or Prajapati Brahma.

Another interpretation is this—whether a person acknowledges it or not, everyone has some form of egotism in him; every person thinks that he is unique in some way and is different from others. This is however against the truth of creation—for whatever exists is a manifestation of one supreme indivisible entity known as Brahm. There is no scope of any notion of 'this entity' and 'that entity' as having two separate distinct existences; there is no duality between any two entities in this creation because the same supreme Brahm has revealed himself as the entire creation, and the same Atma or consciousness lives in all the creatures of this creation notwithstanding the form or shape they have for their bodies. Only wise and self-realised persons think in these terms. That is why it is said later here in this verse that when a man burns his sins, i.e. when he has overcome such negative traits as having any trace of Ahankar in him as described here, it is only then that he becomes as exalted as the Viraat Purush. Otherwise he remains confined to being simply a human being.

²The word 'Purush' stands for such virtues as being manly, valorous, valiant, courageous, strong, resolute, stern, potential and powerful because only a resolute and determined man with strength of courage, firm conviction and steady determination would be resolute and committed enough to take a firm stand on any subject and go hammer and tong for what he decides to do—in this case, Prajapati's decision was to eliminate sins and he resolutely did it. Having overcome negative traits, such as having Ahankar for instance, Prajapati was elevated to an exalted stature of the Viraat Purush. This 'Purush' was the primary creator and the macrocosmic gross body of the creation; he was a direct revelation of Brahm at the macro level, and it was from him that the rest of the creation came into being. Though the two words Purush and Prajapati are often used synonymously, there is a subtle difference between them—the former being a reference to the Viraat or the all inclusive macro form of the cosmos, while the latter refers to the creator who came into being from this Viraat and was responsible for the creation of the rest of the visible form of creation. From the perspective of the Purans, the Viraat Purush is known as Lord Vishnu from whose navel was born the Prajapati Brahma, the creator, atop a divine lotus. Vishnu is treated as the supreme Brahm, but Brahma is not.

³If any person tries to justify that his body is his true identity and not his soul, then such persons are ignorant of the universal truth of the Atma and existence. Hence, they are morally defeated by those who are wise, erudite and self-realised. In other words, such ignorant and deluded people are left behind in the race for liberation and deliverance from the bondages that tie a creature to this entrapping world of an endless cycle of death and birth by those who are more proficient in the knowledge about Brahm, the Atma and the creation.

The opening line of this Brahman resembles the opening lines of Brahman 2— 'In the beginning, there was nothing'. This opening sentence prepares us for the narration of one of the various metaphysical versions of the genesis of the gross, physical aspect of creation of this world.

The Holy Bible says about creation as follows—'Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or

principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist' (Colossians, 1/15-17).]

2. Then he (the primary first Purush) became afraid. That is why a lonely man gets frightened of his loneliness, or is afraid when he finds himself alone without company. Then he thought to himself that 'if there is no one except me, from whom should I fear?'

As soon as he realised this, his fear was dispelled because 'fear' comes from others, and not from one's own self. When there is no one else, there is no cause or fear of getting harmed from others (2).

[Note—Since the creator Prajapati had assumed the body with sense organs like that of a man at the time of creation, he had the same ignorance that the man has—viz. that he is subject to death as he had not realised the prime imperishable and eternal nature of his true self, the Atma. That is why even today a man gets afraid when he is alone. Fear is an element that comes from somebody else for no one is afraid from his own self. Then Prajapati began to ponder the reason for his fears—he thought to himself 'Well, if there is no one besides me, i.e. my Atma, then from whom I should fear?' This enlightenment dispelled all causes of fear in him. That is why even today wise and self-realised men are free from any kind of fear.

Now the question arises from whom did Prajapati get this wisdom? The answer is that he got it by contemplation and meditation. Further, the origin of Prajapati was from the truthful Brahm and therefore he had noble and auspicious 'genes' in him that made him contemplative and wise by nature. It is also evident in the world today that those born in noble families with a history of nobility, auspiciousness and virtuousness usually acquire these characteristics themselves. So when he faced some problem, he began to ponder why that problem arose in the first place.

It has been said earlier that Prajapati had successfully vanquished all his sins (verse no.1), so his intellect was freed from the corrupting influences that hinder the light of wisdom to shine through. A corrupted mind cannot think properly and in the correct direction. When Prajapati became afraid, then instead of panicking he pondered over the cause of his fears and discovered that it was due to his ignorance about the fact that he had erroneously thought that (a) he would die or that his body would perish, (b) there was a competitor for him who would snatch away his rights, and (c) he was surrounded by sins and can fall into their traps. But when he contemplated he discovered that his truthful identity was not his body but his pure conscious Atma which is imperishable, that the Atma in him is the same as the Atma in the other person making that other person an image of his own self and thereby removing any scope of competition or fear, and that the sins are accumulated only when this Atma gets involved in the deeds done by the body and not otherwise.]

3. Since he was alone, he felt lonely, bored and disenchanted. That is why a lonely person feels lonely and gets bored and disenchanted with his loneliness. Therefore he wished to have someone as his companion. So he transformed his unitary, unisexual form into two forms—viz. the form of a male and that of a female who are in close embrace. That is, he divided his own body into a male (or a husband) and a female (or a wife)¹.

The wise sage Yagyavalkya² says— 'That is why this body is like one half of the husk that covers the grain of a cereal such as rice or wheat'. The

grain of rice has the seed covered by the husk which protects it. This rice grain acts as a seed for the next generation of rice plant. But it needs the protection of the husk even as a woman needs the protection of the man. The space inside the husk is like the 'sky' or Akash element, while the grain present in this space is the female aspect of Nature and the husk itself is the male. It is by the union of the male and the female that this creation is possible³ (3).

[Note :-¹Before the man became a husband, i.e. before he marries a woman, he is the other half of his own self. That is, he is like that Viraat Purush called the Prajapati prior to his splitting himself into two halves— i.e. he is lonely, bored and disenchanted. That is why also an unmarried man is like paddy without the grain, or a pea-pod without its seed. In other words, an unmarried man cannot reproduce his own self as his progeny and remains unsatisfied and disenchanted like the Prajapati. But it must be noted that this applies to the situation when Prajapati had 'some desire', and that desire was to have company. This company resulted in setting off a chain of events that resulted in the creation of this huge creation of living creatures. Had Prajapati no desires, he would have remained in peace with himself. This brings to an interesting deduction—viz. the root cause of all troubles is 'desire', and root cause of desire is not remaining contented with what we have.

²The etymology of the word Yagyavalkya is = 'Yagya' meaning a religious fire sacrifice, and 'Valka' means one who speaks or preaches. That is, a person who speaks about religious or spiritual matters is called Yagya+valk = Yagyavalkya. Sage Yagyavalkya's other name was Daivрати. He was the son of Brahma, the creator.

³There was nothing in the beginning except the Viraat Purush or the primary macrocosmic Male aspect of Nature. This Viraat Purush was the cosmic gross body of creation. When he decided that he needed to create, he became eager to find ways to implement his wishes. This wish of his transformed itself into a female. Since he was the male aspect of creation, the other half that he created became his counterpart, the female. We deduce here that the female was the 'other half' of the same Viraat Purush much like an amoeba splitting itself into two units, both similar to each other.

Another perspective is that Prajapati, the creator who is regarded as the first male, had an auspicious desire to initiate creation. This desire of his manifested itself as the first female named 'Shatrupa', which literally means one who is a true image or personification of the auspicious desires of that Prajapati who had the virtues of truthfulness, righteousness, virtuousness and auspiciousness. Therefore, that lady known as Shatrupa, the personified form of Prajapati's desires, then became his wife as described in this verse. The male counterpart of Shatrupa was the first human male named Manu who was an image of Brahma the creator or Prajapati. Manu and Shatrupa were the first gross forms of the cosmic Viraat Purush and Prakriti who had manifested themselves as the latter respectively. That is why it is said that Shatrupa was both the daughter of Prajapati (because she was created by him) as well as his wife (because she was the wife of Manu who himself was a manifestation of Prajapati).

The process of creation, in the first instance when it all started, was like a grain of rice or wheat coming out from inside the covering of the husk, or an oyster opening its shell into two, when the seed or the pearl matures respectively. From the perspective of the Purans, from the supreme creator Brahm was produced the Viraat Purush (the macrocosmic Male) and Prakriti (his female counterpart), and from Viraat Purush was produced Brahma, the creator, and Savitri, his female counterpart. Prajapati was another name for Brahma because he was the care taker of the subjects of creation. This Prajapati

became Manu, and Shatrupa became his wife as described above. There were the first humans produced by Brahma, the creator.]

4. That woman wondered, 'Why does this man wish to have conjugal relationship with me though he has created me from his own body? It would be good that I hide myself somewhere to avoid him'. So she became a cow, and the Purush (male) became a bull. From them were produced calves that matured into cows and bullocks.

Again in order to hide herself from him, she transformed herself into a mare, and the bull became a stallion.

She then metamorphosed herself into a she-ass, and the Purush (as the stallion) into an ass; from them were produced the hoofed animals.

As a next step she became a she-goat, and the ass transformed into a he-goat. When she became a ewe, he became a ram.

In this way, the goats and sheep (and other animals classified as domestic cattle) were created. Similarly, ants and all other creatures that form a couple were created (4).

5. After this creation was put into place, that supreme Purush who had manifested himself as Prajapati became aware of the fact that all this myriad creation is his own handiwork. So he thought that 'He is creation' (because the creation was created by him from his own body, and therefore the creation resembled Prajapati or the Viraat Purush, as is very clear in verse no. 3 and 4, and was therefore a part of him, or an image of him). This is how he (Prajapati or Purush) came to be known as 'Srishti' (i.e. creation). That is, the creation and the creator are synonymous with each other. A person who knows the secret mystery of this creation as described above gets fame, majesty and a good reputation of being a sagacious and wise scholar in this (Prajapati's) creation, because he is aware of its hidden secrets (5).

[Note—This verse endorses the universal theory of Vedanta that the creator created this creation from his own self in his own image, and then subtly entered it as its Atma or consciousness that is uniformly present throughout it. Hence, there is nothing that exists that is beyond the creator and not pervaded by him.]

6. [In order to create the Gods who would preside over this creation—] He (Prajapati) vigorously rubbed the cavity of his mouth with his two palms. This rubbing produced the 'fire'. That is why the inside of the palms as well as the cavity of the mouth have no hairs. Also, since the mouth was the crucible where fire of life was created, the 'womb' (of the female), which provides the necessary 'fire' or the vital spark of life that initiates creation in the form of life in an embryo, is also without any hair.

However, those priests presiding over fire sacrifices who ask that the different Gods (such as the Fire God, Indra etc.) be worshipped separately do not know that all the Gods are incorporated in and represented by the one and the only supreme Lord of creation. [That is, the worship of the one supreme

transcendental Brahm is equivalent to worshipping his numerous manifestations as different Gods.]

It is that 'one and the only one' supreme transcendental Lord who has created the varied world. All the Gods are nothing else but myriad versions of that one and the only one Lord God.

Whatever fluid or liquid form that exists was created by him from his sperm; it personifies his 'Tej' or energy and vitality, potentials and potent, and it has also taken the form of Som (the invigorating and rejuvenating drink that is used at religious ceremonies; the ambrosia or elixir of life)¹.

Som is 'Anna' or the food that exist in creation².

Similarly, the Fire is the sustainer and caretaker of creation, i.e. it is the essence that is present in food which provides the creation with its vigour and vitality³.

This is a fantastically majestic, stupendously magnificent and a grand creation of the supreme, transcendental, inexplicable and enigmatic Brahm. It is a marvel and the strange mystery that Brahma the creator created the immortal Gods though he himself is subject to death⁴.

That is why it is called a most wonderful, a greatly mysterious, a stupendously fascinating and a marvelously wondrous creation (because so many mysterious things have happened which are beyond explanation and logic, having no plausible and explicable explanation for their happening). A person, who knows this creation in the way it is, gets fame and glory as well as honour and respect as being a wise, sagacious and learned one who is well versed in the intricate mysteries of creation and its truth (6).

[Note--¹That is, liquids and fluids such as water, honey and nectar contain the vital life-sustaining and nourishing factors of life that represent the 'sperm' of the cosmic creator, or the vital life forces that have the potential not only to conceive life but also to sustain, develop and nourish it. In other words, water and other forms of liquids or fluids are synonymous with life; they inherently harbour life. This observation is obvious because no life is possible anywhere if there was no liquid or fluid element in Nature. The life would have parched itself to death. When scientists search for signs for life in distant corners of the universe, they look for traces of water more than anything else.

²The 'Som/Soma' is a metaphor for a nourishing liquid that is a form of fluid food that provides nourishment to the creation. The creator created water which harboured the primary signs of life in this creation and was the essential necessity for the production of food that would sustain the creation created. Without water no plant can take in its nourishment from the soil, and without water this absorbed nourishment cannot move up the body of the plant through its different vessels such as xylem and phloem. Similarly, water is absolutely essential for the living creature; blood consists essentially of water and it is the latter that helps the food eaten to get digested and transported in the body so as to nourish all the part of it equally. Som is a liquid, and therefore it symbolises all the 'liquids' created by the creator representing the life sustaining qualities which are exemplified by water.

³In other words, without fire the food can neither be cooked nor be digested by the creature, and the life-sustaining energy present in food is in turn the 'fire' that keeps the lamp of life burning.

⁴Every form of creation that has an origin will certainly have an end, and this includes not only Brahma but also Vishnu the sustainer and Shiva the concluder. These

Trinity Gods have a beginning and therefore an end, though their life span is much greater than other creatures. The immortal Gods referred here are not some kind of supernatural Beings with a divine body residing somewhere in heavens, because then they would also be subjected to the same rule of conclusion that applies to Brahma, but refer to the auspicious virtues and immortal qualities that are truthful and immortal because they are possessed by Brahm who is the supreme authority that transcends this mortal creation. This Brahm predates this creation and remain even when it concludes. In other words, these 'immortal Gods' refer to the quality of immortality that the truthful Brahm possesses. When the time comes, a new Brahma would immerge form this Brahm. The fact that Brahma, the patriarch of this visible creation, is subjected to death or conclusion is very clearly mentioned in Brahman no. 2, verse nos. 1 and 7. Refer also to Tripadvibhut Maha-narayan Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 10-11.]

7. In the beginning, this creation was nameless and formless (i.e. it had no attributes and definitions). Thereafter, when it was revealed it got a name and form¹.

That is why even today, anything is known only when we know about its name and form because we need both to describe an entity. We can know about anything only when we become aware of its form, its name and its characteristic features and attributes; it is impossible to describe anything we see or know about without assigning any name or form to it, or assigning any special features characteristic to it.

That primary attributeless entity (i.e. the supreme transcendental Brahm who has entered the creation as its Atma or life) has entered the body of a living creature and uniformly pervades throughout it, even till the edge of the nail, just like a scalpel's or a razor's base is embedded in its wooden handle, and fire is inherently but imperceptibly present in a latent form in the firewood or established on the bed of the fire pit, but it is not possible for anyone to actually see that entity (i.e. the Atma) in a tangible and visible form (because it is inexplicably hidden from view, being microscopic fine, subtle and imperceptible).

That esoteric and sublime entity (i.e. the Atma residing as the pure consciousness in the living creature) is called 'Pran' because it infuses life in a creature, but it has different names and attributes depending upon the different functions it performs. For example, it is called Pran, which is the process of breathing, because it injects life in the body by bringing in oxygen, ventilating the lungs, collecting all the poisonous gases from inside the body and helping their elimination when the breath is exhaled. Similarly, the same Pran (consciousness or vital life in a creature) is called 'speech' because it carries out the function of speaking, it is called 'sight' because it carries out the function of seeing, it is called 'hearing' because it carries out the function of hearing, and it is called 'Mana' (mind and intellect) because it thinks, ponders and contemplates. All these different names assigned to the same Pran are the various aliases or nicknames given to it according to the functions it carries out in the body. They define only one or the other aspect of Pran, but they do not define it in its entirety. This definition of Pran as being speech, sight, hearing etc. is a fractured view of Pran; they are not the complete and comprehensive definition of Pran if considered separately.

Thus, anyone who adores, honours, reveres and worships Pran with these separate names, having these independent identities and existences, does not know, or is not aware of its truthful form and essential nature because all these apparently different names which describe different virtues, qualities, characteristic features or attributes belong not to different entities but to the same entity known as Pran².

This Atma (i.e. the pure conscious factor of life and the most essential and vital aspect of creation without which nothing can be defined as alive and worthwhile) is therefore the only worthy entity that is needed to be known by everyone because when one comes to know about it, the essential nature of the entire world can be understood by him³.

Even as a lost animal can be found by following its footprint (pug mark) on the ground, a person can deduce everything about the world following the clues provided by the knowledge of the Atma. He who knows this basic tenet gets fame and glory as a wise and enlightened person in the world (7).

[Note--¹That is, in the beginning the world as we know it today had no form, name and attributes, because Brahm who was present before the appearance of the creation has no form, name and attributes. When the latter decided to start the process of creation, he created this world in his own image, i.e. as being without a form and attributes. That is why the first manifestation of creation at the macrocosmic level was Hiranyagarbha (the macrocosmic subtle body of the cosmos), and from the latter emerged the Viraat Purush (the macrocosmic gross body of the entire creation and from whom the rest of the visible creation came into being) as well as Prakriti (Nature in its vast form). None of these entities had any form and attributes that can be conclusively described in words. When the process of creation went ahead, these indescribable entities transformed or crystallised themselves into forms that could be described and assigned certain characteristics because they had physical features, verifiable qualities and discernible attributes. The name given to each individual entity of creation helped to distinguish one from the other so as not to create confusion, but really they were indistinguishable because all of them were 'an image of the formless Brahm'. In short, what was primarily unqualified, having no name and form, was made qualified with a certain name and form.

²That is, the faculties of hearing, speaking, seeing etc. are the different functions carried out by the single entity known as Pran or pure conscious Atma which infuses life inside the body of a living creature. All these functions help the Atma to live a normal life and it would be impossible for any living being to survive without the Pran performing all these functions in its various manifestations. Therefore, to say that a man has Pran or life in him because he can see is a misrepresentation of the truthful fact about Pran because 'sight' is only one of the many functions that Pran performs. Hence, the Pran should be taken in its entirety as the life-infusing force in the body of a creature, and not as some individual function that the body carries out.

³It is a constant refrain in the Upanishads that this Atma is the only conscious factor and the only truth in existence, while everything that is non-Atma is non-truth. Even as any wise man would endeavour to pursue truth and not falsehood, a wise follower of the path of spiritualism should pursue this Atma to the exclusion of everything else. For example, one should attempt to acquire gold and not brass though the latter also shines like gold. An ignorant man can be misled to believe that a piece of brass is valuable because it looks like gold, but it is impossible to mislead a goldsmith.

See also canto 1, Brahman 6 in this context.]

8. In this way, it (the Atma) is dearer than one's own son, one's own wealth, and all other things put together. If a person loves anything else more than his own Atma residing in his own bosom, then he virtually loses his own pure self; he forgets about his Atma which is his most precious asset.

A spiritual aspirant who worships, honours and reveres his prime Atma, which is his true self and pure consciousness, and shows it more respect, love and importance than anything else in this world, then such a person never dies; he becomes immortal (because he would have realised that his true identity is the Atma which is immortal and imperishable) (8).

9. [The following verses expound and elucidate upon 'Brahm-Vidya', or the knowledge pertaining to the supreme, transcendental, enigmatic and sublime quintessential divine entity in creation known as Brahm—] Wise and erudite people have asserted that it is believed that by acquiring the knowledge known as the Brahm-Vidya, a person 'acquires everything he wishes or aspires for'. What is the basis of this assertion? Has anybody become an expert in Brahm-Vidya by which he has got everything he desired or aspired for?

[Or, what is that special quality in Brahm, the knowledge of which makes the man so competent and potent that he can attain anything that he aspires for? What does he know that is not known to others which makes him so powerful and wise that he is capable of doing everything?] (9).

10. In the beginning there was only one entity known as 'Brahm'. [Compare this with the opening lines of canto 1, Brahman 1, verse no. 1; and Brahman 4, verse no. 1 and 7.] Realising this fact that 'I am Brahm', he transformed himself into all the myriad forms that the creation took; he visualised that the entire creation with its varied forms and innumerable features is nothing but his own image or his own personification¹.

Amongst the Gods, all those who realised who Brahm actually was became one like him in his likeness². Similarly, amongst ordinary humans and the exalted sages and seers, all those who acquired his truthful knowledge (i.e. those who became aware of who Brahm truthfully and essentially was), all such people became an image of Brahm (i.e. they became as wise, enlightened, exalted and omniscient as Brahm; they became self-realised).

Sage Vamdeo said, 'By knowing him (Brahm), I have become one like (or equivalent to) Manu and Sun'. [That is, he felt that he has become as exalted and respected as the first human male in the form of Manu, and also like the glorious, splendourous and dazzling celestial body known as the Sun that gives light to the entire world and at the same time is a metaphor for illumination and light of knowledge.]

Even now, anyone who believes in the dictum 'I am Brahm' (which indeed everyone is, except that only a few wise and enlightened people realise this truth) becomes universally one with the rest of the creation

(because the entire creation, including that person, is a non-dual image of the one Supreme Being called Brahm). Even the Gods are not able to defeat him, simply because such a wise and enlightened person becomes a de-facto image of those Gods themselves; he becomes a synonym for their own exalted stature and being, and he represents their (God's) own Atma.

A person who distinguishes between himself and others becomes equivalent to an animal (i.e. he lacks wisdom, erudition, intelligence and knowledge of the truth). Even as the different animals serve humans, the unwise and stupid human, who is no better than an animal in his ignorance of the truth, too serves different Gods³.

If one animal is stolen, a person feels bad. If more than one animal is stolen, it would look worse. That is why the Gods do not want that people acquire a comprehensive and complete knowledge pertaining to Brahm (because if they do, they would become wise and enlightened and respectable and exalted like these Gods themselves: then who would serve these selfish Gods?)⁴ (10).

[Note—¹Since Brahm pervades in everything in a uniform and universal manner, since everything that exists has its genesis in Brahm and is nothing else but an image of Brahm, since Brahm embodies the whole creation from the minutest to the most colossus in his own self, and since Brahm has the unique characteristic of being omnipresent, immanent, all-pervading, all-encompassing etc. which are some of the numerous and uncountable virtues and attributes of Brahm, this fact that he transformed himself into all the available and imaginable forms in this creation upon the realisation of his magnificent and stupendous potentials is absolutely feasible and truthful depiction of events.

²This statement is very significant and important, being profound in its import and reach as well as in its mystery. The man has sense organs, and the various Gods had taken up their symbolic residences in his body at the time of creation as has been clearly said in Aitareyopanishad of the Rig Veda tradition. They then became the presiding deities or the patron Gods of different parts of his body. When a person's pure self, the conscious Atma, tries to think of something different than these Gods and their comfort zones, the latter feel threatened and try all the tricks they know of to lure the Atma away from its enhanced spiritual stature and turn it towards the demeaning and degrading pleasures and attractions of the deluding artificial world that would satisfy the need for self gratification of the sense organs over which these Gods preside. The Gods try their best to prevent the Atma in seeking self-realisation and they keep it trapped in the vortex of worldly pleasures and enjoyments to serve their own vested interests. This is the implied meaning of the statement that the Gods prevent the man from getting a comprehensive knowledge of Brahm which is tantamount to complete enlightenment. Since the Gods preside over the sense organs, the latter always try to pull the wise man towards the world and away from the supreme Brahm residing in his bosom as his Atma or soul, because in such a situation when a wise man turns away from the material world of sensual pleasure, he would become a recluse and a renunciate, a situation which the Gods do not like because then there would be no one to serve them through the gratification of their respective sense organs over which they presides. Once enlightened, the man would not serve these Gods. In other words, he would prefer to do Tapa (or penances and austerities), suffer hardships, renounce all his attraction towards the world, treat his foe as well as his friend alike, would shun gratification of the sense organs and indulging in all sorts of sins and evils just to provide comfort and pleasure to the sense

organs of the body— all of which the Gods would not like because they have become accustomed to being appeased and pampered and served. See note no. 4 below.

³The apparent difference between a God, who is an exalted Being, and an ordinary human being, is the level of wisdom and erudition that they have. While a God is a metaphor for someone who is wise and self-realised and possesses auspicious virtues, the word 'human' is ordinarily used for those who think that they have a body which is their 'self', instead of their soul or Atma, and who indulge in the pursuit of this world and self gratification as if this was the ultimate object and end of their taking birth. Humans are generally shrouded by the veil of ignorance about their own truthful identity or their pure conscious self called their Atma, and this ignorance eclipses their spiritual wisdom and erudition. If a man becomes wise and self-realised, he acquires the same potentials that the Gods possess.

⁴As has been pointed out above in note no. 2, these Gods represent the various vital functions carried out by the different sense organs of the body. These sense organs have an inherent tendency to enjoy the pleasures and comforts that come with indulgence in this world of material objects. In case a man develops renunciation from them because he has realised their falsehood and the illusory nature of worldly relationships such as son, mother, father, friend, wife, family etc., resulting in his withdrawing into his own self and spending his time on meditation, then these patron Gods would cease to enjoy the material comforts of the sensual world that they are accustomed to. That is why they feel annoyed if any person develops enlightenment, and they do their best to create hurdles in his spiritual path of self-realisation.]

11. In the beginning this Brahm was alone. [Refer Brahman 1, verse no. 1 and Brahman 4, verse nos. 1, 7 and 10 in this context.] But being alone, he was unable to display and enhance the greatness of his 'Vibhuti', or was unable to unfold and spread his magnificent glory and majesty, his supreme authority and prowess, his unmatched fame and excellence, his stupendous potentials and supernatural powers. He therefore decided to initiate some steps to propagate these virtues, and to ensure that they get established and protected at the same time. So (he first created the Brahmans who represented him and then) he created the Kshatriya class¹.

Amongst the Gods that were created as representative of this Kshatriya class were Varun (the Water God), Indra (the king of Gods), Som (the Moon God), Rudra (one of the forms of Lord Shiva, the concluder, in his angry form), Parjanya (the Rain God), Mritu (the Death God), Yam (the God of justice after death; the senior God who directs Mritu), and Ishan (Lord Shiva himself)².

That is why the Kshatriya class is considered the best (amongst the four classes into which the society is divided, because they represent these Gods who preside over the day to day functioning of the creation and take care of its routine welfare and conduct). That is also why during a sacrificial fire ceremony called 'Rajsuya Yagya', a Brahman priest is seated at a level lower than where the chief patron of the sacrifice, i.e. the king who is a Kshatriya by class, is seated, and the Brahmin priest shows respect and honour to the king³.

This Brahm, represented by the Brahmin priest, is symbolic of the cosmic womb from where Kshatriya has been born. [Since all the creatures

were born as off springs of the supreme Brahm, the Kshatriyas were also conceived in the womb of Brahm.] That is why, though during the course of the performance of the Rajsuya Yagya, a Kshatriya is deemed to be senior to a Brahmin, but after the rituals are over the former (i.e. the Kshatriya) takes the shelter or the blessing of the latter (i.e. the Brahmin)⁴.

A Kshatriya who harms or injures or causes any injustice to a Brahmin is deemed to have harmed the foundation from which he had taken birth, or which was the cause for his coming into being. He has literally insulted his own mother (which is an unpardonable and an abhorable sin). Such a person who harms or commits violence against his best foundation, against his best means of support and succour as well as his best well-wisher (i.e. against a Brahmin representing Brahma), becomes very sinful and despicable (11).

[Note—(a) ¹Brahma, the supreme creator, created the Kshatriya class in his own likeness, i.e. as having the same features as the other class that he created and which represented him, and that was the Brahmin class. He thought to himself that it was his duty to create, and as Prajapati, to sustain his subjects once produced or created by him. So the first class of men was the Brahmins who derived their name from the fact that they represented Brahma and were as exalted as him. These Brahmins helped to spread the glory of Brahm, but they needed protection from other negative elements of creation, such as the demons. This fact that demons were also as an integral part of creation as the Gods and humans is borne out by the fact that all three had approached Brahma, the patriarch of creation, requesting him to tell them some code of conduct to be implemented in life as mentioned in Canto 5, Brahman 1 of this Upanishad. So the initial class of people needed someone who would give them protection from evil forces, and thus were created the Kshatriyas.

There is another way at looking at this stanza as follows—In the beginning there was only Brahm. Earlier it has been said in verse no. 3-5, 7 and 10 that Brahm transformed himself into numerous forms, all of them in his own likeness. He produced first the Viraat Purush who revealed himself in the form of Vishnu. From Vishnu was created Brahma, and from the latter was created Manu (the first human male) and Shatrupa (the first human female), and finally from this couple came into being the whole of the human race. Since Manu was a direct descendant of Brahma—who himself got his name because he was a revelation of the eternal Brahm who is the un-manifested and nameless supreme, transcendental Being—he was called a Brahmin. His descendents were called after him as Brahmins. These earlier generations lived a righteous life like their father Brahma, the creator. But as population increased, competition set in, giving rise to jealousy and ill-will as desire for material comforts increased, and with limited supply, animosity increased proportionately and exponentially. Then Prajapati, the guardian of creation, needed someone to keep control over warring factions of Brahmins. So he created the Kshatriya class. The word 'Kshatriya' has 'Kshatra' as its first half, meaning a ceremonial umbrella placed on the head of a king, symbolising his temporal power and authority. In order to control chaos and recklessness amongst the members of the society who were initially only Brahmins, power and strength were needed along with the authority to implement the laws regulating their behaviour. Hence, Brahm created the Kshatriya class and empowered them sufficiently to protect the Brahmins, first from infighting amongst themselves, and later on to protect the society as a whole when the necessity would arise for the creation of other classes of society to delegate and distribute the complex work of daily humdrum life between them for its smooth functioning. That is why those who were the most exalted and capable amongst the first phase of creation,

i.e. the Gods listed in this verse, were assigned the job of protecting the creation, and were therefore called or classified as 'Kshatriyas', i.e. those who have the so-called 'ceremonial umbrella, representing power, strength and authority, over their heads'.

²The Gods that are likened to the Kshatriyas are assigned the job of giving protection to the creation. For example Varun, the Water God, gives the essential life-sustaining elixir called the water which not only has the potential to conceive the creation in its bosom but also sustain, protect and nourish the creation that it harbours; it gives protection against drought and dehydration. Similarly, Indra is the God of the sense organs and all other Gods who preside over these sense organs of the creature, because he is the 'king of Gods'. Som is the Moon God who rules over the mind and the heart, indicating that a king should use his mind and intelligence as well as his heart symbolising the virtues of mercy and compassion while dealing with his subjects. Rudra is the patron God of anger which becomes necessary to enforce discipline and the rule of law; Parjanya, who is the God of clouds, controls the rain which is like the elixir of life falling down upon the earth from the heaven; Mritu represents capital punishment for those deserve it; and Ishan, the Lord who is one of the forms of Shiva, symbolises a king or Lord who enforces the laws of Dharma relentlessly (which means that Lord Ishan is one who upholds such virtues as righteousness, auspiciousness, nobility of thought and action etc.) without any compromise or bias, because the word Ishan also means an insignia, or the one who upholds the insignia of Dharma.

³Normally Brahmins are seated at a level higher than the Kshatriya class, because in Hindu hierarchical society, Brahmins are senior to the rest of the three classes consisting of the Kshatriyas, followed by the Vaishyas, and finally the Shudras who are at the lower end of this social hierarchy.

⁴Since Brahma is like a mother to the Kshatriya class and is also represented by a Brahmin, it follows that the Brahmin deserves the same honour and reverence that one reserves for one's mother. Further, since the Brahmins also represent Brahma—the old grandfather patriarch of creation who had created not only the humans but also the rest of the visible creation and its inhabitant creatures—they are like a father for the Kshatriyas. Hence, the Kshatriya should revere the Brahmins as their parents, both as a mother as well as a father.

(b) Verse nos. 11-15 describes how the four classes in Hindu society came into being. The four sections into which the Hindu society has been divided by ancient sages/seers are the following—(a) Brahmins (b) Kshatriyas, (c) Vaishyas, and (d) Shudras. These are called the four Varnas. The division was done to regulate its functioning by delegation of authority and clearly specifying the jobs each section is supposed to do to maintain order and system in the world, to prevent overlapping of functions and avoid anarchy and chaos. These four sections are— (a) Brahmins*—the learned and teaching class; a wise one well-versed in the knowledge of the ultimate Truth about the supernatural Being called Brahm. They also presided over religious functions as priests, because these functions were central to life in the Vedic period; (b) Kshatriyas—they were the warrior, fighting, kingly class. They were assigned the job of giving protection to the society, dispensing justice and maintaining general law and order. (c) Vaishyas—they were the trading and farming class responsible for commerce and wealth generation. They provided for the necessities for a comfortable life. And finally (d) the Shudras—the service class of people whose main function was to free the other three classes from the humdrums of daily chores and concentrate their energies to the particular jobs assigned to those classes to which they belonged.

*The salient features of Brahmins are the following—they should possess these noble qualities—(1) 'Riju'-be expert in the Rig and the Yajur Vedas, (2) 'Tapa'-should be involved in doing penances, observing austerities and enduring sufferings for the welfare

of the soul and the society, (3) 'Santosh'-be contented and satisfied, (4) 'Kshamaa'-to be forgiving and tolerant, (5) 'Sheel'-to have such virtues as good character, dignity, decorum and virtuousness, (6) 'Jitendriya'-to have self control over the sense organs, (7) 'Data'-to be a giver, one who sacrifices his own interests for the benefit of others, (8) 'Gyani'-one who is well learned, wise, enlightened and erudite, (9) 'Dayaalu'-to be merciful and compassionate. [Shatpath Brahman.] An entire Upanishad called Vajra-shuchiko-panishad, belonging to the Sam Veda tradition is devoted to the subject.

These four classes of the human race were created from the single father, the Viraat or Brahma. Their origins are indicative of the different jobs that they were assigned so as to enable the creator perform the task of governance just like a king assigns separate jobs to his different ministers. But it must be clearly understood here that each class of the human race was like a part of the body of the Supreme Being, and even as a man feels disfigured and handicapped as well as feels the pain equally if his leg is cut off from the rest of his body as he feels when his arm or head is severed, the Lord feels betrayed and hurt when even one of his sons is subjected to humiliation and pain. The four classes had specific jobs cut for them so that the society could function smoothly.

The Brahmins have their origin from the mouth of Brahma the creator. Since the mouth is used to give advice and teach others, the primary job of the Brahmins was to act as moral guides to their brethrens. The four Vedas, which are repository of all knowledge that exist, were also created from the mouth of Brahma; hence these Brahmins were considered most wise and learned. The arms are metaphors for strength and powers; they are used to protect and help others. Hence, the Kshatriyas, who were created from the arms of Brahma, were those sons of his who would provide the needed protection and security to their other brethrens. In order to feed his creation, Brahma had to toil and labour to provide for the maintenance and financial and material well being of the society for merely teaching and protecting would not suffice without some one to take care of the other necessities of life. So he created the Vaishyas from his thighs, symbolising labour, to pick up the mantle of mundane affairs of life. But there must be someone who would do the daily chores, such as tilling the fields, doing the harvesting, washing and cleaning, and all other such odd jobs. This was assigned to the Shudras who were born from Brahma's feet symbolising service.

None of these classes were meant to be inferior or superior to one another; they were all parts of the body of the same Brahma. In fact, the leg bears the burden of the body; just imagine what would have happened if Brahma had not created anyone from his legs? How would the Brahmin walk, how would the Kshatriya fight, and how would the Vaishya do his commercial activities if he could not walk? Similar arguments can be applied to other classes. See also Aitereyo-panishad, 1/1/4.]

12. That Brahma (now being referred to as the Brahmin class), even after creating the Kshatriya class (as described in verse no. 11), was not able to develop properly, i.e. he lacked the required wealth needed to sustain the growth of population. Therefore, he created the class known as the 'Vaishyas¹'. The other name of a Vaishya is 'Ganash' —that is why Vaishyas, or the trading and wealth-creating class, worships Lord Ganesh² as their patron deity. Amongst the Gods³, Vasu, Rudra, Aditya, Vishwadev and Marut are called Vaishyas, and their patron God is Ganesh (12).

[Note--¹When population increased, Brahm in his manifestation as Brahma, the patriarch creator who was represented in this world by the Brahmins, found the need to delegate the job of doing commerce, agriculture and animal husbandry to a select group of people

from amongst themselves, who were later on designated with a special title known as Vaishyas. By and by, these special groups of Brahmins who were assigned the duty of looking after the material needs of the other Brahmins were called Vaishyas. Since a single man could not do this task requiring much diligent effort and enterprise, a group was involved in any such function. For example, to do farming many hands were needed, right from the tilling of land, sowing of seed, up to harvesting, thrashing of grain, storing it in the granary and distributing it to those who need it, i.e. marketing and selling it.

²Hence the word 'Ganesh' is used to describe Vaishyas because 'Gana' means 'numbers', or 'a great number of people who worked together as juniors to their masters', helping them with their work. The Vaishyas work collectively in large numbers, because any kind of trading activity, farming, animal husbandry or any kind of wealth-creating activity requires the help of a chain of workers. It is not possible for any single individual to accomplish success in commerce single handedly. That is why they are also called as 'worshipper of numbers', or 'experts with counting of numbers' represented by their patron God, Lord Ganesh.

³The Gods that take care of the different aspects of providing the daily needs of creation and sustaining it, are collectively called Vaishyas. There are eight Vasus who are the patron Gods of various forms of material wealth such as gold, gems and precious stones, as well as the essential ingredients of life such as the elements of fire and water, and Kuber who is the God's treasurer and responsible for the safe custody of these assets of creation.

'Rudra' is the angry form of Shiva; anger is necessary sometime to fight for one's commercial rights.

'Aditya' is the Sun which is obviously needed for agriculture and giving day light to the creatures. It is very obvious that without the Sun life would be impossible to sustain in this world.

The 'Vishwadev' means 'the God of the world'; the Vishwadev are the different Gods of all the mythological worlds in creation—such as the subterranean world, the terrestrial world and the celestial world.

'Marut' is the Wind God; there are forty-nine in number. Air or wind is very necessary for everything, from the formation of clouds which produce rain to help the earth to sustain life and maintain the water level, to the presence of the very notion of life inside the body because it is the vital winds present in it that enables the body to carry out its functions in the required manner. The importance of the air/wind element can be judged from the fact that 'breath', which is another name of air passing through the nostrils, is the most important factor for life in any human being; it is called his Pran or life.

All these Gods look after all the material needs and well being of creation. So they are like the Vaishyas because they look after the nitty-gritty of creation.]

13. Even after this (i.e. even after the creation of the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas), he (i.e. Brahma the creator in his manifestation as Brahmin, the senior most class of humans in this creation) was not satisfied as he felt that maturity in his planning has not being fully obtained. Then he, therefore, created the fourth class of people called the Shudras. The God named Pusha is of the Shudra category amongst all the Gods. This earth is Pusha, because all that exist here is served by the earth. The earth forms the foot of the Viraat Purush; the Shudras also represent the foot—or the lowest level of society. Even as the foot is meant to serve the rest of the body and helps the

body to stand on its own, the Shudras help the rest of the three classes to stand up and carry on with their assigned tasks (13).

(14). Even after all this, Brahma, the creator, felt that his efforts to complete the process of creation have not reached their full maturity. So he then produced 'Dharma' representing the virtues of righteousness, auspiciousness, nobility of thought and conduct, goodness, propriety and probity as well as the laws that govern or define these virtues and their application in the society which give 'Shrey', i.e. happiness, good fortunes, auspiciousness, prosperities, glory, majesty, credit, eminence, goodness etc. to the people. This Dharma element was the so-called ceremonial umbrella (known as the Kshatra) of even the Kshatriya class of the society, because only those kings who were stringent followers of the righteous path could prosper and become famous as well as acquire majesty and honour in the world. The rest of the kings who did not have the so called ceremonial umbrella of Dharma over their heads sunk into oblivion. Therefore, there is nothing better than Dharma.

Even if a man has no physical strength, no wealth and no scholarship, he is able to rule over others (i.e. he prevails upon them and people respect him) if he has Dharma on his side just like a king who might himself be physically weak or handicapped in body but is righteous and a strict follower of probity and propriety in his dealing with his subjects, has his glory and fame spread throughout the realm, and all sorts of people obey him and respect him if he is just, kind, compassionate, righteous and noble.

Dharma is indeed an embodiment of Truth; it embodies Truth. That is why those who speak the truth are called righteous and honourable; they are venerated by the society. Such people who are righteous and honourable are therefore called 'truthful followers of Dharma', because they speak the essence of Dharma which is Truth, and nothing but the Truth (14).

[Note--This verse is one of the greatest maxims and axioms taught by the Upanishads—that truthfulness and righteousness are the noblest qualities produced by Brahm in this creation. It is only after the creation of Dharma—the laws of rightful and auspicious behaviour—that Prajapati Brahma, the patriarch of the entire creation, felt fulfilled that his efforts have finally ripened. Prior to this, he wasn't satisfied with what he had created.

Verse no. 11 establishes that Kshatriyas are superior to even the Brahmins, and verse no. 14 goes on to say that Dharma is superior to even the Kshatriyas as well as the Brahmins. In fact, anyone who has the ceremonial umbrella of Dharma over his head is deemed to be a king amongst his peers whether he is a Kshatriyas or not, whether he is a Brahmin, a Vaishya or a Shudra or not. Hence we derive that 'Dharma' is the authority that actually rules over all the other classes in society. Dharma, represented by its quintessential virtue of 'truth', is the overriding virtue that rules over all other virtues in the creation. In fact, Dharma is the supreme authority of this visible creation consisting of the gross world made up of living creatures.]

15. There are four Varnas (division or classes in society). Brahm, who is the primary creator of these four classes, became the 'fire', which is the best and the most potent amongst the basic elements that exist in creation. He became

a Brahmin as well as a Kshatriya, a Vaishya as well as a Shudra amongst the humans¹. [See verse nos. 11-14.]

That is why men honour Gods by offering sacrifices or oblations to the Fire God (during a religious ceremony), and they respect and give donations to the Brahmins and employ them for the purpose of pleasing the Gods to invoke their blessings so that their desires can be fulfilled, because these two, i.e. the Fire and Brahmins, are the senior most revelations of Brahm and Brahma respectively².

One must endeavour to learn and become enlightened about one's 'true self' (or about one's conscious Atma or soul). Otherwise, if one dies without this awareness then he has no chance of attaining any auspicious end just like the Vedas go in vain without studying and understanding them with due intelligence and wisdom, or doing any religious exercise fails if not done in a proper way³.

All the good deeds done and their beneficial effects become null and void if a person does not acquire the knowledge about one's true self or about one's own Atma. On the contrary, the good deeds and their righteous effects never decay or diminish for a man who worships and honours his Atma; all his desires and aspirations are fulfilled (15).

[Note--¹That is, amongst the Gods who are invisible, Brahm manifested himself as the Fire God, while amongst their visible counterparts in this world he transformed himself as the Brahmin amongst the humans. In other words, the Brahmins are to the humans what the Fire is to the Gods. In the entire kingdom of creation represented by uncountable species of living creatures on this earth, the human being is considered the most powerful and the most potential just like the Gods are amongst the celestial creation. And the Brahmin is the most potential amongst the humans just like the Fire is amongst all the Gods.

²Fire is the subtle manifestation of Brahm exhibiting his stupendous energy, potential powers, majesty and force, while the Brahmins represent the same glory of Brahm in his visible manifestation as the senior most and the wisest amongst men in the entire creation. Brahmins are supposed to possess the same potential as that possessed by the fire element. That is why they are employed to perform the fire-sacrifice because they are deemed to be 'brothers' of the Fire God. The Gods would listen to their pleadings on behalf of other humans because of the fact that they are related to the Fire God who is the senior God amongst them. The transcendent Lord, Brahm, had initially created Brahma, the patriarch of creation at the very beginning of the process itself, and the latter had created the Brahmins as his offspring. So, these Brahmins represent both the Supreme Being (Brahm) who manifested himself as the all-powerful Fire element, as well as Brahma, the patriarch.

³If one simply learns the Vedas like a parrot without understanding the import of their tenets, they would endlessly chant the hymns without reaping any spiritual benefit from them. It is like a student learning any English essay by heart to pass an examination, but this rote learning will not give him any benefit of reading English in life. Similarly, everything has a proper system to do it, and if things are done in a hurry then they do not give the desired result. In the same fashion, if a man does not spend his time in realising who he actually is, then he may die an ordinary death with a burden of sins upon his conscious. On the other hand, a self-realised man would have vanquished sins while alive, he would have detached himself from all worldly attachments, and calmly exit

from this world at the appropriate time without any regrets. This death would give him the ultimate peace that any man yearns for. The man who is ignorant about his true self as his Atma would be indulging in the pursuit of the world, and at the time of death he would be restless and agitated because his mind would be thinking of this world, about his material wealth, about his unfinished tasks, about the so many comforts and pleasures that he has been enjoying till his death and which he would not be enjoying any more. This state of restlessness of this man would be in sharp contrast to the peace of mind of a self-realised man.]

16. This Atma or pure conscious soul (here referring to the supreme authority Brahm who has created this world as described in the previous verses of this Brahmin, and then establishes himself in it as its Atma that controls it from within) gives shelter, refuge, protection and succour to all the creatures. That is, it is the 'Loka'¹ or the abode or the dwelling place of all the creatures.

When this Atma (which is the true identity of a man) does any religious sacrifice, it becomes a shelter or a dwelling place for the Gods (i.e. the Gods find their succour and sustenance in this exercise undertaken by the Atma because had there been no Atma no one would have offered oblations to the sacred fire from which the Gods derive their food)².

This Atma becomes the Loka of the exalted sages and seers when they study the scriptures (because they find their real destination and goal in life when they study the scriptures which unequivocally establish that the Atma is the only truthful entity in this otherwise deluding world).

When this Atma desires to have an offspring, it becomes the Loka for the householder (because his whole mind and entire thought is concentrated in having an heir, and since this world is a creation of the mind inspired by the desire of the conscious Atma to have an offspring, the man begins to love this 'creation of his', i.e. the world (or Loka) as he would love his own son).

When the Atma offers food to dead ancestors in the form of a 'Pinda' (a rounded ball of cooked cereals offered to dead ancestors), it becomes their shelter (because the latter depend upon the food offered to them by their descendents, and only a living man characterised by having a soul or Atma or 'life' can give this offering, and not a dead body of a man from which the consciousness has left).

Similarly, when it (i.e. the Atma) gives shelter and hope as well as food and nourishment to other humans, it becomes their shelter (because they depend upon a magnanimous, benevolent and generous man who has a 'soul' as compared to a man who is 'soulless' and cruel and even snatches away whatever poor people have).

When this Atma gives water and fodder/grass to animals, or helps them to graze in the fields, it becomes their shelter (obviously because the animals depend upon the man here symbolised by the Atma). Likewise, it is also the shelter for domestic pets such as dogs and cats as well as other creatures as birds or ants³.

That is the reason every creature in this world wants to protect such a wise and self-realised person⁴ even as everyone likes to protect his own body and his own self.

The necessity of doing these noble deeds and meritorious work along with their good effects and the powers they bestow upon the doer of such deeds have been discussed in the context of ‘Panch Mahayagya’ —or the five great sacrifices⁵ (16).

[Note—¹The word ‘Loka’ literally means the dwelling place or a habitat of a person. For example, we say that Dev-loka is the abode of Gods, and the word here refers to the heavens where the Gods live. Since Brahm took up residence in the creature as its living consciousness present in its bosom as its Atma without which the creature’s body wouldn’t have been able to show any signs of life whatsoever, and since Brahm is the primary cause and controlling authority that controls them from within, the Atma is regarded as the seat of authority or the centre from where all powers that govern the creature’s every movement and action are controlled and directed. Without the Atma the creature would be as good as dead, and therefore the word ‘Loka’ is a metaphor for this Atma because the latter gives the life its basic foundation and meaning, its relevance and importance. Without it there would be no life in the first place. Hence, the Atma is the de-facto abode or Loka of the creature where his ‘true self’ can be found. In other words, if we wish to meet the creature, we would have to search for it in its Atma.

²Fire sacrifices are done by people who are ‘living’, i.e. by those people who have an Atma or consciousness in them, and not by dead persons. All activity done by a man needs a conscious effort, and only religious men perform religious sacrifices to honour the Gods. The offerings are meant for the Gods but the medium is the sacred ‘fire’ which is a symbol of life and energy represented by the Atma of the creature, and which is in turn a representative of Brahm (see verse no. 6 and 15 above). The Gods obtain their sustenance from this ‘fire’, and therefore it is like their abode or Loka. Further, the actual entity that offers oblations to this fire is the Atma of the man who performs the sacrifice, because the body of the man is not his true identity but is only a vehicle to carry the Atma which is however his truthful self or identity. Hence, for all practical purposes, it is the Atma that does the fire sacrifice, and not the body of the man. Obviously then it is the Atma which is the cause of the sustenance of the Gods, and therefore it is their Loka or abode from which they get their solace and succour. This argument will apply to all other examples given here.

³A cruel man who has no ‘soul’ in him, or a person who has no mercy and compassion in him, a person who is cruel and merciless and selfish, would not bother to look after the comfort and well being of other members of the creation. He would have no compunctions in killing them at the slightest pretext. It will be observed in our daily lives that pet dogs are very fond of their doting masters, but when they see any menacing stranger whom they think to be a danger to their safety, they would bark and snap at them instead of wagging their tails. The virtues of compassion, mercy, magnanimity, kindness, graciousness, benevolence and love are the hallmarks of the pure Atma or soul. That is why self-realised ‘souls’ such as sages and seers, hermits and ascetics etc. are so merciful that animals of the wild forest did not harm them when they lived in forests as part of their last phase of life; instead they roamed around them freely.

⁴Which kind of person would the creatures like to protect? The answer is—that person who performs religious ceremonies to give shelter to the Gods, who studies the scriptures or helps in such studies to support wise and erudite sages and seers in their mission of spreading spiritual awareness, who keeps his dead ancestors satisfied by offering them food, who provides food and shelter to his fellow humans, who takes proper care of animals as well as other lowly creatures, such as cats, dogs, birds ants, etc. who are dependent upon him and look upon him for their protection and sustenance. In

short, every creature would like to ensure that such people are protected and helped because all living beings wish to have someone in their midst who would give them protection and security when needed, who would look after their interests, and who would give them shelter and refuge, solace and succour selflessly.

⁵The five great religious sacrifices or Panch Mahayagya are the following—(1) ‘Bhut Yagya’ refers to taking care of other creatures in creation, such as feeding animals and providing for their protection and shelter; (2) ‘Manushya Yagya’ refers to doing the same thing for fellow human beings as done for animals and other creatures of this creation; (3) ‘Pitri Yagya’ refers to offering oblations to dead ancestors and doing religious activities for the peace of their souls; (4) ‘Dev Yagya’ refers to the performance of fire sacrifices in which offerings are given to the sacred fire which sustain the Gods and are done to honour them; and (5) ‘Brahm Yagya’ refers to the study of the Vedas and other scriptures that enlighten the man about the ultimate Truth known as Brahm. These five sacrifices have been described in Ashramo-panishad, verse no. 3.]

17. In the beginning of the creation, this Atma was all alone. [This fact has been repeatedly asserted in canto no. 1. Refer Brahman 2, verse no. 1; Brahman 4, verse nos. 1, 7, 10 and 11.] It¹ desired for a woman (i.e. a wife) and then subjects (offspring) to keep company with and remain involved in. Then it desired that it should have wealth and it should do different deeds. Humans (representing the conscious Atma) generally have these sorts of desires and aspirations², and they never get more than this (resulting in their remaining ever unfulfilled and discontented)³.

Now, if they wish, they can convert this lack of contentment and satisfaction by having the following philosophical view point— ‘let me treat my Mana (mind) as my Atma, my speech as my wife, my Pran (the life sustaining vital winds present in the body) as my children, my eyes as symbolising my worldly assets (because without the eyes, the world becomes dark, gloomy and worthless; no one can see what he possesses without his faculty of sight which uses the eyes to enable a man to see his worldly assets and possessions that give him satisfaction), and my ears as divine and sublime assets (because I can learn about superior topics such as spiritualism, metaphysics, theology, philosophical wisdom, Mantras etc, through hearing of them by my ears; I can hear religious discourses, preaching and teachings of great saints, sayings of the scriptures through my ears). For a person who thinks in this way, his body is metaphorically his ‘deed’ because any deed is done by the body. Therefore, all his sacramental religious needs, such as doing Yagya (fire sacrifices), can be done by these five elements such as his Atma (which is his true self), his speech (which is metaphorically his wife), his Pran (which is metaphorically his children), his eyes (which are metaphorically his worldly assets), and his ears (which are metaphorically his divine assets).

These five elements are present in all the living creatures. Hence, an animal is a ‘Paankta’ (someone who has the five basic needs to do a religious sacrifice), a man is a Paankta for the same reason, and similarly all other living creatures are also Paanktas⁴.

That is, this entire creation is a symbolic fire sacrifice involving these five basic elements (of the pure conscious Atma, the faculty of speech, the

vital winds called Pran, the eyes symbolising the faculty of sight, and the ears symbolising the faculty of hearing). A person who is wise and sagacious enough to have this knowledge, who can comprehend the broad ramifications of these symbolic representations of divinity, who realises the esoteric and enigmatic meaning of the cosmic sacrifice which is divine, sublime, subtle and hallowed, is able to acquire all the elements he desires as described in this verse (i.e. he gets a good wife, has compatible and obedient children, gets wealth and prosperity, and successfully accomplishes all deeds that he endeavours to do, and consequentially gets renown and glory in this world). He is honoured and praised for his great wisdom and enlightenment; he gets renown and acquires magnificence with this eclectic knowledge (because all people respect wise and learned persons) (17).

[Note--¹The pronoun “it” is used here for Atma in the first sentence because the Atma is the neuter gender; the same Atma is present in everything that exists—whether that entity is a male or a female, whether it belongs to the human race or the animal kingdom, whether it is a plant or an insect or a worm. So the pronouns ‘he’ or ‘she’ are not proper words to use for the Atma. Since the Atma is synonymous with Brahma, it therefore would be proper to use the pronoun ‘it’ for Brahm also, because Brahm is also a neuter gender. To sight an instance, light which symbolises knowledge is synonym for Brahm, and light is referred to by the pronoun ‘it’, and neither by the pronouns ‘he’ or ‘she’.

²If a person is indeed wise and enlightened enough to know the truth and reality about Brahm, then why does he get willingly trapped into doing deeds and suffering from its consequences, instead of involving himself in pursuing nobler objectives of self-upliftment and spiritual enhancement by acquiring truthful knowledge and detaching himself from getting involved in doing deeds in this world? The answer lies in the fact that all the Gods who preside over the various sense organs try to swerve the creature away from the Atma and bend him towards the world. The creature is basically divine by nature because every one of them has an Atma and this Atma is fundamentally pure and holy, and it always seeks freedom from the bondage of this body in which it has unfortunately found itself due to its own ignorance. Then what is the reason that the creature has lost its divinity? The answer lies in the different worldly desires, lusts and passions which it has that tear it away from its path of liberation and deliverance, and instead tie it down to this mundane world. This point has been very clearly elucidated in this verse. See also verse no. 10 in this context.

³This stanza stresses that desire, aspirations, volitions and hopes can never be completely realised or fulfilled. If one tries to find happiness, peace, bliss and contentment in the hope that he will get them if such and such task is successfully done, then he is living in a fool’s paradise. The real contentment, peace, happiness and bliss come when greed for seeking happiness and peace in the external world ceases completely; real contentment comes from seeking it internally and having a broad view of things rather than being short sighted and having a myopic view of the cosmos through the lens self-interest and a biased intellect.

⁴That is, given the will and the right level of wisdom, each creature can perform a holy sacrifice without going through the elaborate rituals, because the basic and primary requirements for doing any religious deed is present in all living creatures who have a body. It should be noted here that even the Atma that has got the body of an animal due to its past deeds can hope to have enlightenment and do religious deeds that are auspicious and provider of liberation and deliverance from the endless cycle of birth and death in which the Atma has been trapped based upon the deeds done by it in a particular

life if that Atma gets the right environment that is conducive to spiritual upliftment. It might be asked how an animal can do this? The answer lies in the fact that if the household in which this animal lives has a religious environment and religious discourses are held in it, if the scriptures are recited aloud and if the holy name of the Lord is chanted, the Atma living in the body of that animal would get the same benefit as that got by the human members of that household. On the contrary, if the humans living there have their minds diverted elsewhere even while apparently listening to religious recitations, then it is as good as their not being there at all; or if their mind is thinking of some unrighteous thoughts while their lips are reciting holy Mantras, then they are simply cheating themselves as well as others.]

Canto 1/Brahman 5

[This Brahman or section of the Upanishad describes the creation of food that would sustain and nourish the creation created by the supreme father, Prajapati Brahma. It goes on to describe the importance of Mana (mind, its thoughts and emotions), Vaani (speech), and Pran (the vital life sustaining forces present in the body; breath or the vital airs.)]

1. The supreme father, i.e. Prajapati Brahma, created seven categories of food by the good effects of, or as an auspicious result of his doing severe Tapa (penances) accompanied by pertinent Gyan (knowledge or science of how to go about the whole process)¹.

He distributed the seven types of food created by him as follows—one kind of food was meant for all the creatures, two kinds were kept aside for the Gods, three kinds were kept by him for his own use, and one was distributed among all the animals.

All the creatures who breathe as well as those who do not breathe were made to share in the food set aside for the members of the animal kingdom².

These categories or classes of food are being constantly consumed by them, yet their supply never diminishes. What is the reason? A person who realises the hidden meaning and subtle implication of this statement about the distribution of food and its inexhaustible supply, the fact that everyone who is created by the creator will be taken care of by him and get his share according to his needs and no one would be allowed to starve by the creator for the want of it, is able to enjoy food on a perpetual basis, without any shortage of it. When such a wise man eats food by the medium of his mouth he is actually offering oblations to the different Gods symbolically residing inside his body, because the food eaten by the mouth is used by the entire body evenly and all the organs derive equal nourishment from this food³.

A wise, erudite and self-realised person gets full satisfaction and mental peace that he would not have to die for want of food, or starve for it. In other words, he attains Amrit or the ambrosia of eternity and peace (1).

[Note—¹Once Prajapati created the subjects of his kingdom, he needed to feed them. In order to feed them, food was needed. And in order to create food, he had to make sincere and hard efforts, which means he had to do severe 'Tapa', and he needed to apply relevant technology, or knowledge called Gyan, to bring about the actual production of

food. With the relevant knowledge and effort he produced seven primary types of food items.

²The food set aside for the lower rung of creatures such as animals was meant for the consumption of both the creatures of the botanical as well as the zoological kingdoms. The humans were to consume the first type of food set aside in the first instance. The process of breathing referred here is when one breathes using the lungs like done by a large number of animals, birds, reptiles and certain fishes as well as other evolutionary developed members of the zoological kingdom such as humans. Those who breathe without inhaling and exhaling fresh air like we humans do, and even like so many animals and birds do, such as for example those creatures belonging to the lower rung of the evolutionary ladder, e.g. bacteria, viruses, marine creatures, amoeba, insects and worms etc. are included in the second category of those creatures who do not breathe. Even the members of the plant kingdom come under this latter category, for no plant ever breathe like we humans do in the normal course of our lives. They do take in oxygen and give out carbon dioxide, but they have a different process for it.

³A wise man realises that the food is created by the creator for the sustenance of his creation and not for indulgence. The different Gods are present symbolically inside the body and they represent the different vital functions that the body carries out through the sense organs of the man; these Gods are metaphors for the vital forces of Nature that govern the functioning of the entire creation, and since the man's body is the cosmos in microcosm, these Gods of the creation are present in his body in a micro form. When a man eats food with the intention of offering oblations to these divine forces of creation represented by the Gods present in his own body, then each morsel eaten by him becomes equivalent to one offering into the sacred fire of the religious sacrifice. Anything done with righteous and auspicious intentions and any deed done as an offering to the supreme Lord become holy and divine. Since the Gods represent the supreme forces of Nature and they in turn represent the supreme transcendental authority known as the Brahm, when they are fed by the food eaten by the man who is wise and erudite, they get enhanced and nourished by these offerings, and thus they ensure that the food supply never gets diminished. Why is it said that the man should be 'wise and erudite'? It is because only a wise and erudite man would know that what he is eating is not meant to satisfy his taste buds or his hunger, or the food in this world is not meant to be indulged into, but should be considered as an offering to the Gods and that each morsel eaten is equivalent to an offering to the sacred fire lit during a religious sacrifice. So the morsels of food that he eats keep the divine fire of creation perpetually burning by keeping the forces of Nature satisfied and well provided for.

It is like the case when the fire of a fire-pit is perpetually kept burning by constantly replenishing the supply of fuel such as oil or firewood. The Gods representing the powerful forces of Nature are perpetually kept satisfied by the food offerings eaten by a wise man, and they in turn ensure that the supply does never exhaust.

There is another reason for the inexhaustible supply of food. Brahm is eternal, imperishable and inexhaustible. So when the wise man eats food to sustain his body which is the habitat of the different Gods representing the different functions of this supreme Brahm, or who are the different manifestations of this Brahm, he is actually nourishing that supreme Brahm himself. Now, this Brahm is his pure conscious self or his Atma, and this Atma in turn is the same in all the living creatures. Therefore symbolically he is nourishing the primary forces of Nature as well as the principal authority known as Brahm by the food he eats. Even as an ordinary king never lets a person who serves him go hungry if that king has a full granary, the supreme King of this creation, i.e. Brahm, the supreme Lord, in his role as the creator known as Brahma, would surely ensure that his wise subjects are well fed.

This verse has great significance as it indicates that the basic necessities of life are well provided for by the supreme creator, and it is the insatiable greed in the creature that causes all shortages.]

2. The seven types of food were produced by the father of creation by doing Tapa or hard labour and diligent effort, accompanied by proper Gyan or technical know-how (as described in verse no. 1). Out of those, one is of the general category. [It is produced from earth, such as the different cereals, pulses, vegetables, tubers and edible roots etc.]

Everyone, all the creatures, have a share in it; hence everyone should share this type of food equally amongst themselves. A person who selfishly uses this type or category of food, which is meant for the consumption of all the living creatures, just for his own self, can never free himself from having committed a grave sin, for he is virtually usurping that which belongs to others; he is starving his brethrens of their rightful sustenance and nourishment.

Out of the next two food categories said to be reserved for the Gods, one was 'Hooth' (the food offered directly to Gods through the offerings made in the sacred fire during fire sacrifices and other religious ceremonies), and the other was 'Prahooth' (that food which is offered as Prasad or as previously sanctified food offerings made to the Gods during religious worship). Some scholars call it 'Darsh' and 'Purnamash' respectively¹. Since the various religious sacrifices (called Yagya) are meant for the Gods, and since they are meant for offering the share of the food created by Prajapati for the Gods to them, they should not be done to fulfill one's own worldly desires, or the offerings to the sacred fire should not be offered with some vested personal interests. The fire sacrifices as well as the offerings of food to the Gods should be done in a selfless manner, without any expectations of any return for them.

The third type of food meant for the animals is symbolised by milk. Both the animals and the humans consume this food².

A newly born infant is made to lick clarified butter (called ghee) or is breast fed. Even a newly born calf does not eat grass by grazing in the meadows; it rather suckles milk from the udder of its mother, the cow. All the creatures find sustenance and nourishment in milk, whether they are those who breathe through the lung and nose, or not.

Those who say that a person who does fire sacrifices (or other religious rituals or ceremonies) by using milk as an offering to the sacred fire (or the deity) for one full year gets immortality, are erroneous in their understanding, because the day, even the very first day, when milk is offered as an offering or oblation to the Gods, such a man gets victory over death and he does not have to wait for the entire year. Such a wise and enlightened person is deemed to be offering the various Gods the food that is meant for them.

Now the question arises, why does the food never diminish inspite of it being regularly consumed by so many countless consumers? The answer is that the wise and self-realised man (who selflessly offers food to others)

becomes virtually imperishable³. From the practical perspective, such a man lives a long working life so that he can grow more and better food⁴. He and his progeny use hard work and intelligence along with technical knowledge and skill to keep on generating more and more food. If the human race loses its ability to work hard and have intelligence, wisdom and knowledge, then it is sure that, by and by, the production of food will decline and finally stop one day. This would have catastrophic consequences for the entire creation.

The food is taken in through the mouth and that is why it satisfies all the Gods (i.e. its benefits are received by all the Gods representing the different sense organs of the body, because the food eaten through the mouth is used by the entire body; see also canto 1, Brahman 3, verse nos. 17-19 and Brahman 4, verse no. 6 in this context). This food provides the fundamental basis for creation and acts as its bulwark because the energy of food eaten provides the necessary impetus, vitality and stamina that keep the wheel of creation turning perpetually. In other words, the food is like Amrit or the ambrosia that provides immortality to the creation (i.e. it provides the nourishment needed for a healthy body of the creature which lives long, works hard, and reproduces the next generation of creation in its own likeness so that the chain of creation continues). This is the miracle, majesty and glory of the quintessential factor of life, called 'food', in creation (2).

[Note :- ¹The word 'Darsh' means sacrifice performed in the new moon day or the day following the dark moon night, while Purnamash refers to the sacrifice performed on the full moon day. Since religious sacrifices in ancient times were done according to the lunar calendar, these two days were considered the most auspicious ones because the first day symbolises the beginning of the creation and the gradual enhancement of the glory, virtues and potentials of the person who does the fire sacrifice even as the shine, glory and beauty of the disc of the moon goes on increasing day by day during the first half of the lunar month. This gradual enhancement of the glory of the moon continues until the full moon day when it is at its pinnacle of glory and majesty, and this latter full disk of the moon symbolises accomplishment of all glories and virtues by the spiritual seeker or aspirant. Therefore, the fire sacrifice done at the beginning of the lunar month symbolises the beginning of the process of evolution and the sincere resolve of the aspirant to gradually enhance his authority, majesty, virtues, glories, powers and potentials, while the one done on the full moon day marks the culmination of his successful spiritual journey and fulfillment of all his desires.

²The food eaten by mammals is converted into milk which is the basic food for this category of creatures, and humans fall under this category. When a child is born, it is nourished by milk, and this milk is regarded as complete food for this category of creatures. Now, this word 'milk' is a metaphor for all wholesome liquids that supply nourishment to the creature and have life sustaining qualities, and that includes water. This is why both men and animals not only drink milk but cannot survive without water.

³How does a man conquer death and become immortal? A wise man offers the best he has to the Gods who represent the immortal factors of creation. At the time of the beginning of creation, the Viraat Purush or the self created Brahma had wished to create and he had done a symbolic fire sacrifice wherein he had offered his own self as an offering. Since there was nothing at the beginning, he had to offer himself. When the creation came into being, this Viraat manifested himself as the human being. So a wise man symbolically offers himself to the Gods and thereby becomes one like them, i.e. he

becomes immortal. No wonder in it because wisdom makes a man illustrious and enlightened, and this entails that he has realised his true self which is indeed eternal and imperishable as the pure conscious Atma.

⁴A wise man is self controlled which implies that he never over eats or indulges in eating junk food for the sake of its taste. This ensures that he has a comparatively healthy body and can lead a long and productive life. Besides this, the human race is considered 'imperishable' because it can perpetuate itself indefinitely by reproducing, because it is strong, powerful and potent as compared to other creatures, because it is the ruler of this creation who manages to subjugate the rest of the creatures who could offer competition to him, because it has the wherewithal for a long life in the form of medicines and other modern tools, and because it is hardworking and the most intelligent amongst the entire creation of Prajapati Brahma.]

3. [Verse no. 1 says that Prajapati kept three parts or categories of food for himself, i.e. for his own use or for his own Atma. The following verses describe how those three parts are superior to other forms of food.]

Prajapati selected three foods for himself. These three are symbolically represented by the Mana (mind), the Vaani (spoken words; the faculty of speech), and the Pran (the vital winds or forces that sustain life).

The focused Mana or mind is at the center of successful completion of all tasks. If the mind is diverted elsewhere or distracted by something, if all the faculties of the mind are not working in tandem and in a coordinated way, we would not see or hear anything in a cogent and a comprehensive manner. That is why it is usually said—'My mind was engaged somewhere else so I could not see a particular thing properly; therefore I cannot remember what I saw', or 'my mind was not here so I could not hear what you said'. That is, it is clear that the mind is the one who actually sees or hears anything for the creature, and not the sense organs that are used by the creature to see or hear, such as the eye or the ear respectively. These organs simply act as a medium for the mind on behalf of the creature to receive data, information and impulses from the outside world, but the actual process of perception is carried on in the brain, through its various faculties associated with different organs of perception and action present in the body.

Kaam (worldly lust, desire and passion), Sankalp (resolve, determination, volition etc.) Sanshaya (doubts and confusions), Shradha and Ashradha (belief, faith, conviction, reverence and devotion for anything or anyone, as well as the lack of them respectively), Dhriti and Adhriti (steadfastness, firmness, resolutions, or the lack of these virtues respectively), Hrim or Lajja (shame, self respect, dignity etc), Buddhi (intelligence, wisdom, erudition, discrimination etc.), and Bhaye (fears, consternations, perplexities, horrors etc.) —all of them have their existence due to the presence of the mind. They are there because the mind thinks that these traits, perceptions or concepts exist; otherwise they have no actual existence.

That is why also, when a man's back is touched, he becomes aware that he is being touched by someone because of the existence of the perception of touch in the mind, though he is unable to actually see, hear or know who has touched him. [If the mind ceases to function, or if the mind is diverted somewhere else, or if the mind does not pay attention to the sense of someone touching a person's back, that person would never know or remember at all that he had been ever touched on his back by someone.]

Words are manifestation of the power of speech; they are the medium of the faculty of speech which enables a person to express or voice all his feelings and

emotions, all his intentions and thoughts. The words, through the medium of speech, are a medium by which the person expresses or voices what is in his heart and mind.

There are five vital winds/airs present in the body, and they are collectively called 'Panch Pran'. These are the following—Pran (breath), Apaana (the wind that passes down the intestine), Udaana (the wind which moves up), Vyana (the wind which maintains equilibrium), and Samana (which regulates circulation and even distribution of food). It is upon these five vital winds/airs that the Atma, which is the truthful identity of the creature and which is pure consciousness and the 'true self', relies upon to stay inside the body of the creature (3).

[Note—Verse no. 2 has already stated that the food offered to the Gods as Hoot and Prahoot gives benefit only when they are offered to them selflessly. The Atma is the personification or a representative of the supreme Brahm, and the mind, the speech and the Pran are the three elements through which this Atma expresses itself. These are used by it to carry on its functions, and their proper functioning keeps it contented, well nourished and healthy. These three, i.e. the Mana, the Vaani and the Pran, are therefore the symbolic foods meant for the sustenance of the Atma inside the body, because the Atma cannot properly function without them, and they together provide the Atma a means for its effective existence. Therefore, a man must not use them for his own selfish and vested interests because they do not belong to him, they are not meant for his own use, but instead they are meant for the supreme Brahm in the form of the Atma.

That is, a wise person does not use his mind, his speech and his life to pursue this artificial material world of delusions and entrapments; he does not indulge in self gratification and pursuing of the materialistic comforts and pleasures of the world; he does not allow his mind to think of the world and its perishable and impermanent pleasures; he does not allow his speech to talk about worthless worldly things; he does not allow his vital winds/airs to waste their energy away in futile chatter and pursuit of the world, in doing useless exercises that do not nourish and contribute to the well being and the enhancement of the stature of his Atma.]

4. These three—the Mana (mind), Vaani (speech), and Pran (vital winds/airs)—are metaphors for the three worlds, called the Trilokas. The faculty of speech, i.e. the Vaani, represents the earth (and that is why, all work is accomplished on this earth by the use of words and voice as in making a speech or speaking to someone. Imagine a world full of dumb people where no one can speak!)

Mana (mind) represents the next world, called the Antariksha, which is the sky above the earth and up to the edge of the solar system (and that is why the mind has a tendency to swiftly fly from one place to another, and it wanders here and there like the creatures who live in the sky—such as the birds and flies; the mind can go anywhere without any hindrance because the sky creates no obstacles in its path).

Finally, the Pran (the vital winds/airs) represents the third world known as the Duloka, or the heaven which is the inter galactic space beyond the solar system (and that is why the cosmic wind occupies all that space which is not occupied by anything else such as the planets, stars, asteroids etc in the universe) (4).

5. They (the mind, speech and wind/air) also represent the three Vedas. The speech represents the Rig Veda, the mind represents the Yajur Veda, and the Pran represent the Sam Veda (5).

[Note--This is symbolic of the fact that the Rig Veda is a compendium of the first articulately spoken words that were intelligently and systematically composed by Prajapati Brahma in the beginning of creation, and it was primarily ritualistic in nature. The Yajur Veda required the mind because it had philosophy and metaphysics at its core besides the fact that it described the elaborate process involved in the sacrificial exercise. And the Sam Veda represents Pran because it requires the powers of breath in order to enable the aspirant to sing its verses melodiously as is evident from the rendering of classical songs which involve the ability to control the breath for extended periods of time to produce prolonged notes of sound. For singing properly one needs a good and sweet voice (Vaani) as well as its coordination with breath (Pran), because they together produce different tones and tunes from the throat and mouth which are collectively called a song. These organs—the throat and the mouth—are also used by a person to speak. Therefore, singing and good speaking are simply two aspects of the same coin; that is, they represent the incantation of the Sam Veda. See also canto 1, Brahman 3, verse nos. 22-23.]

6. These three (the mind, speech and Pran) are symbolic of the Gods, the dead ancestors, and the humans. The power of speech represents the Gods, the mind represents the spirits of dead ancestors called Pittars, and the Pran represents the humans known as Manushya (6).

[Note--Speech comes from the mouth where the most exalted vital wind/air, the Pran, which is the senior most amongst the Gods, lives —see canto one Brahman 3, verse nos. 20, 21, 24. Hence, speech represents Gods.

The mind wanders rapidly from one place to another like the spirit of dead ancestors or Pittars who roam about freely in space and can move from one place to another very swiftly in a fraction of a second. They appear and disappear very swiftly, almost like a ghost. This is the reason why the mind is so fickle and transient.

The Pran, which is the life sustaining wind/air element, is obviously a metaphor for a living man, the Manushya, for no man can ever hope to live without the presence of breath inside his body, along with the presence of other vital winds/airs which together help in sustaining his life.]

7. Again, these three (the mind, speech and Pran) are like a father, a mother and their children. The faculty of speech is like a mother, the mind is like the father, and the Pran is like the offspring (7).

[Note--When anyone feels hungry or thirsty, he 'asks' for food or drink. Hence, the faculty of speech takes care of his needs, and is therefore like a caring and loving mother who feeds her baby when the child 'cries' for food. Also, when a man is in pain, he 'wails'; when he feels happy, he exults and 'exclaims'. Any kind of expression needs a voice. A child feels so happy and carefree in the presence of its mother; he weeps in front of her and laughs heartily in the presence of its mother. Hence, speech is like a mother. A man uses his faculty of speech to tell others what he needs, when he is in pain and when he is happy, how he feels and what he wants from others just like a child is more comfortable at asking for anything from its mother as compared to its father.

The mind is intelligent, discriminating and wise; it is not sentimental and emotional like the mother. The mind guides the man in a balanced manner, and prepares him to face the world. The mind helps the man to create wealth, take care of his education, business,

vocation and livelihood. It helps him to plan and execute. It is analytical and logical. Hence, it is like a father who prepares the child to face the world by providing him with education, guiding him through his business, and inculcating in him special skills to face the world.

The winds are five in number, and they take care of the different functions of the body—viz. the Pran keeps it alive, the Apaana helps in digestion of food and excretion of waste products from the body, the Udaana helps in keeping the body upright and in expelling mucous and other waste gases through the lungs and the mouth, the Vyana maintains body pressure, and the Samana helps in equal distribution of food and nourishment to all the tissues of the body uniformly through the circulation system. Hence the different Prans are like the subjects of the kingdom who take care of the nitty-gritty of existence on behalf of their Lord, the supreme Brahm represented by the Atma in this case. Therefore, these Prans are like the offspring of the Atma.

The link between the mind and speech has also been described in canto 1, Brahman 2, verse no. 4, wherein it is stated that Prajapati created Mana and Vaak, and their union created Samvatsara (or a fixed span of time), symbolising mortality and something that is finite as opposed to immortality or infinity. In other words, everything created by Prajapati using his mind and speech have a fixed life span; they are mortal and would come to an end one day as opposed to the Atma which represents the supreme, transcendental Brahm who is eternal and infinite]

8. They (the mind, speech and Pran) are Vigyaat (that which is known), Vigigyaas (that which is worth knowing and is sought after), and Avigyaat (that which is not known). The first (Vigyaat—that which is known knowledge) is a metaphor for speech because one speaks of things one knows about; one cannot speak of things that are not known to him. The faculty of speech protects its knower, i.e. the wise Atma, by the virtue of possessing knowledge¹ (8).

[Note--¹For example, when a man faces some obstacles, say an animal standing in his way, the faculty of speech makes relevant sounds to remove that obstacle from his way, and it thereby protects the man from getting injured by that animal and helps him to move ahead. Another example of how the faculty of speech protects the knower is when a person is warned of impending danger by someone who knows about it before hand.]

9. Whatever there is 'worth knowing' (Vijigyaat) is a revelation of the Mana (mind). Actually, it is the mind that is worth researching about, worth knowing about and worthy of understanding because all doubts and confusions about even established truths arise in the mind and not in either the speech or the Pran). By becoming 'worthy of being known or understood', it protects the Atma (9).

[Note—The mind or Mana is the only intelligent component of the body, or it is the only intelligent instrument that the Atma uses to remove any doubts as well as to understand whatever information the Atma receives from the outside world. It is a complex instrument however, because it creates doubts and confusions even in things which are actual facts and irrefutable truths, and then endeavours to remove them itself. As any educated man in a modern world knows, the various sciences are meant to unravel the secrets of the functioning of the various complex things which we take for granted in our lives. For example, we try to learn how the computer works, or how a complex chemical formula is formulated, or how a certain machine works, or how the various parts of the

body function, etc. Once we know about the basic principles behind their working, we are better equipped to handle them. Likewise, when we learn about the mind, we are better able to control it from the metaphysical perspective.

For instance, when a person becomes wise in the sense that he has understood the functioning of the mind, he realises the fact that the world, which he had been earlier treating as real and endearing because it was his deluded mind that had told him it was so, is actually false, deluding, artificial and misleading. He wouldn't have realised this if he had not studied the functioning of the mind from the metaphysical perspective. Once he becomes aware of the fact that he should not unduly and blindly rely upon the mind, except with caution and discrimination, he would indeed become wise and enlightened, because then he would first endeavour to control the principal secretary of his, i.e. his mind, in order to attain higher stature for his self or his Atma. Though the mind is indispensable for the Atma as much as a secretary, who is otherwise very competent except for some freakish traits in him, is for his boss, the Atma or the boss should nevertheless be on his guard while dealing with such a subordinate.

Once enlightened about the truth, the Atma or the true self of the man would become disenchanted from the world of artificiality and delusions, and then it would not waste its time anymore in pursuing it, but instead divert its energy towards spiritual pursuits and self improvement.

Another example to show the importance of researching or learning about the mind is when we say that we must find out what a person 'actually' wants in order to remove all doubts in our minds about his actual needs and real intentions. This knowledge helps us to provide precisely what he actually needs or wants, instead of going by his words by which he might not have been able to express himself properly. For instance, when we speak in a foreign tongue or when a person says things which have a double meaning, it is of paramount importance to find out what is in his mind.

It happens often that we attend classes or study books for hours on end but fail to score, then it becomes imperative to find out what is wrong with the 'mind' or the Mana, because it might happen that it was not concentrating on the subject being taught in the class, or the book being read. This clearly shows the importance of learning about the mind and its functioning.

Another instance to emphasise the importance of learning about the mind is when we hear a person speaking something which is sweet and pleasant to hear but he might be deceitful in his heart and have the intention of misleading or cheating us. In this case, the wise mind protects the person by alerting him about the evil designs of the sweet-talking man.

When a man is hungry, the 'mind' tells that he needs food, or when he is sick, the mind tells us what medicine he needs. If we provide him with the necessary food or medicine, we are protecting his Atma by the way of protecting his life. Without the presence of mind, the man would have faced grave danger to his life. If a man dies for want of food and medicine as in this example, it would be tantamount to killing his Atma because the Atma only resides inside the body of a living man.

The mind also helps to protect our own lives or interests if we are able to learn from the experience of other people, and also share the knowledge that we have. For this, the mind is needed.

That is why the Mana or the mind is a factor which is worthy of knowledge and understanding. This is tantamount to the mind protecting the Atma of the knower, because this Atma is the true 'self' or the true identity of the knower.]

10. All that which is 'not known' (Avigyat) is a form of Pran because it protects the body even though it remains concealed or hidden from view (10).

[Note--For example, no one can physically see the wind or air element present inside the body, but it is an established fact that without the wind/air element the body cannot live. The Pran is the most important of the vital winds/airs; no one can actually see, feel or hear the Pran, but nevertheless it is vital for a creature's existence. Since this 'not known' entity is vital for sustenance of life, it is a metaphor for Pran which is the vital life sustaining force in creation. We cannot, or don't, know it, but it is nevertheless there.]

11. The faculty of speech has its gross revelation in the form of the 'earth', and its radiant and glorious form is manifested as the 'fire'. The strength and prowess of speech is equally revealed as the earth as well as the fire (i.e. both showcase the stupendous potentials, vitality and powers that speech possesses) (11).

[Note—It is on the planet earth only that living beings who can speak are to be found. Hence the 'earth' is the abode or the body where such creatures who speak live. It is like the pure conscious soul or the Atma living in the gross body which is its habitat. Words have the potential of 'fire' because speech can ignite emotions that can cause immense events to happen. It can even rouse dormant energy of knowledge in a creature as it happens when a man hears some wise man speak, and he then changes for ever. It is through speech that great leaders have led their people and great revolutions ignited amongst the masses. The latent fire element present in speech can lead to wars, and it can even bring two warring factions to terms because fire is used to weld together two separate pieces of iron. See also verse no. 18 of this Brahman in this context, as well as verse nos. 4 and 18 of Brahman 5, verse no. 17 of Brahman 4, verse no. 21, 27 of Brahman 3, and verse no. 2 of Brahman 2 in this context.]

12. The Duloka (the heavens) is the body of the Mana (mind), while the Aditya (Sun) is its glorious, brilliant, dazzling, splendid and radiant manifestation. The endless and fathomless dimensions of the Duloka and the brilliant luminosity of the Sun are similar to that of the Mana. [In other words, the Mana has these characteristics of being vast and endless as well as brilliant and enlightening.]

It is due to the union of those two brilliant and splendid entities (i.e. the 'fire' of the earth representing speech, and the 'brilliant glory' of the sun representing the mind) that the Pran element has emerged. [That is, Pran, which is the vital life giving and sustaining spark present in the otherwise lifeless body of a creature, possesses the essential virtues which are the hallmarks of both the fire and the sun.]

Pran is also called Indra (who is the king of Gods; it is a metaphor for Pran's superiority over all other essential elements of creation) as well as Ajaayat (the one who is invincible, or the one who has no enemy). An enemy is one who is a competitor, or one who is a rival or an opponent of anybody. A person who is wisened to these facts does not have an enemy¹ (12).

[Note--¹Why does he not have an enemy? It is because a wise person has risen above the mundane considerations of 'mine' and 'your', and treats the entire creation equally, with equanimity. His mind has developed a broad outlook; he is not selfish and self-centered; he is wise and intelligent. His perspectives are broad and sweeping as the outstretched reaches of the sky, and his erudition and wisdom match the glory of the sun. He knows that his Pran is glorious like the sun and incorruptible like the fire. The Pran is the real essence that is to be sought after in the world; it's like the extract (the nectar, the essence)

of the flower representing this world. That extract or essence is already with him, so why should he fight for other worthless things in this world. Further, the wise man thinks that the Atma residing in his bosom is the same as that residing in the other person. This means that the other person is his brother and at par with him. So why should he be jealous of him and why should he treat him as his enemy; can anyone treat his own image as his enemy? See also verse no. 19 of this Brahman below. Also refer Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 2; Canto 3, Brahman 9, verse no. 12 and Canto 5, Brahman 5, verse no. 2-3 in this context.]

13. Water is the body of that Pran, while the Moon represents its glories, its divine illumination as well as its soothing virtues. Both the water and the moon have the same dimension, the same measure, the same quality, the same extent, the same magnitude and the same amount of importance and significance as the Pran¹.

All of these three entities, i.e. the Vaak (the faculty of speech), the Mana (mind) and the Pran (the vital winds/airs that sustain life in the body) are equally important and significant. In other words, these three entities are inseparable from one another and equivalent to each other as far as their metaphysical importance and significance is concerned².

Those who think that these three entities have an end or that they have a fixed term or dimension, such people are able to have sway over such realms that have a fixed dimension and come to an end. On the other hand, those who are wise enough to realise that these entities are eternal and infinite, having no dimension that can be measured or ascertained, such people are able to acquire sway over those realms that have similar qualities³ (13).

[Note--¹The water and the moon are cool, life sustaining and soothing by nature as opposed to the fire and the sun which are inherently scorching by nature. Both these verse nos. 12 and 13 complement each other. Read together they mean that the primary force that creates, sustains and finally even concludes or ends life in this world has, on the one hand, the stupendous and fiery force represented by the Fire element and the Sun, the vigour, the vitality, the energy, the go-get-do entrepreneurial spirit of these entities, and on the other hand it has the virtues of being soothing, calm and tranquil as the Moon and the coolness and life-sustaining virtues of the Water element.

We must note that earlier it has been said that the fire element is concealed subtly in the water element; it is simple to understand this fact. The fire element is a metaphor for the vital spark of life, and it represents the 'warmth' quality of water that is absolutely necessary for life to be sustained and harboured. Water harbours and protects life, while fire burns everything living to ashes—both these are obviously opposite factors, but it must be understood that without the vital 'spark' and 'warmth' of fire latently present in the water, no life can either be borne or sustained in this world by it. That is why, in frigid cold conditions, all life comes to a standstill, and whatever traces of life that exists in such harsh conditions is in a hibernating state. The depth of the ocean is warm, and it sustains an entire marine ecosystem. On the other hand, very few signs of active life are visible on icy glaciers. It has also been observed that there are hot water springs on earth, indicating the presence of fire element in water. So the fire is intrinsic to water in order to make the water sustain life.

Further, it is to be observed that the fire also has the 'cool' qualities of water in it, as is evident when the fiercely burning fire 'cools' down. On a hot summer day, if one

drinks a 'hot' cup of tea his thirst is quenched and not stoked, showing that 'hotness' of tea had a 'cooling' effect on the body.

So the creator struck an equilibrium between these two elements in creation. He empowered the Pran with the potentials of the fire and the water represented by the Sun God and the Moon God respectively. Even as the moon shines because of the light emanating from the sun, the water acquires its life sustaining properties because of the fire element latently present and inherent in it. Similarly, the fire element cannot scorch the creation to cinders because of the quality of coolness present in water. These two—the 'fire' and the 'water'—are both simultaneously present in the 'earth' element which forms the physical gross body of the creature.

Likewise, the Sun is very vital for sustaining life on this planet because without sun's light, there would be no photosynthesis and as a result the entire plant kingdom would be wiped out. The sunlight and sun's energy are very important for all types of creatures, as is evident from the fact that life forms known as dinosaurs had vanished from the surface of the earth when the sky was covered with a dense cloud of dust when a meteor hit the earth millions of years ago, preventing the sunlight from reaching the earth. Similarly, the Moon has the vital role to play during the night because it provides the soothing coldness to the earth that has been subjected to the heat of the sun during the day time. The moon is known to effect tides in the ocean which was of great importance to ships setting sail for distant lands for trade or coming in to harbour. Certain flowers and plants ripen during the night under the moonlight only.

²Any living creature needs all these three entities to survive in this world. They hold equal importance for it. From the metaphysical point of view, the speech represents the terrestrial world or the earth because the latter is the abode or body of speech—see verse no. 11. Similarly, the mind represents the sky because the latter represents its true character—see verse no.12. The union between these two, i.e. the speech and the mind, created the Pran, the vital wind/air that keeps the body alive and active—see verse no. 12. Without the synchronized working of these three units, the creature cannot live comfortably.

A creature needs the Vaak or the voice to interact with others and earth to stay upon. It needs the Mana or the mind to think and the space to grow and develop. And it needs the Pran or the vital wind/air to breathe and carry out the various functions of the body such as excretion, to get up and move, to evenly distribute nourishment to all the organs, to keep balance etc. These three work harmoniously to enable the Atma to live comfortably and meaningfully in the body.

³The body of the creature which harbours these three entities, i.e. in which the Vaak, the Mana and the Pran live, comes to an end when the creature dies. So the creature that erroneously thinks that the body is its 'self' and adores it as such has a limited knowledge, and so his fame and glory is also limited. On the contrary, a wise and erudite man who realises that the 'self' is not the body, but is the Atma which is eternal and imperishable, is able to acquire fame and glory that are in consonant with this wisdom. He becomes renowned for his enlightened views vis-à-vis the world and its illusions.]

14. That Prajapati who is being described here is also known as 'Samvatsar'¹. This Samvatsar has sixteen Kalaas.

That Prajapati (called the Samvatsar and represented by the moon) gradually changes his shape and form over time which is symbolised by the fifteen nights of the moon's waxing phase when its disc grows from a crescent shape to a fully brightly lit disc of the full moon night, as well as its waning phase represented by the gradually fading disc until it vanishes from

sight on the dark moon night². It literally takes fifteen nights to show its fifteen Kalaas or qualities.

The sixteenth Kalaa³ is called 'Dhruv' which means that state which is stable and steady, which does not change and waver.

Therefore, one should not kill or commit any physical violence during the dark moon night. Even for offering sacrifices to the Gods, no creature, even a garden lizard should be killed during this period (because by killing or harming any creature, the man is causing harm to its Pran that is hidden inside the body of that creature, and the patron God of Pran, the Moon God, is watching from the heaven though his face is not visible because of the dark moon's night, and he would surely punish the offender for his heinous crime; the offender should not think that since the Moon is not visible it is not watching)⁴ (14).

[Note--¹Which 'Prajapati' or the Lord of his subjects is being referred to here? That Prajapati who lives as the 'life' of the creature in the form of its Pran as described in verse no. 13 above. This Prajapati has the Moon as its apparent form. That is why we talk about the various phases of the moon called its Kalaas in this verse. Again, Samvatsar literally means a period of one year; it is synonymous with 'Kaal' or the factor that determines the fixed time or tenure after which the entity ceases to exist; it is a metaphor for that which has a limited span of life. This word has been elaborated upon in canto 1, Brahman 2, verse no. 4. Since the Prajapati in the form of the moon representing the Pran has a fixed life span in this dark world because one day the creature has to die, the various Kalaas of the moon refer to the different phases in the life of the creature. The Pran is the vital wind/air element which leaves the body at the time of its death to merge with the primary wind or air element in the creation. This represents the sixteenth Kalaa which is said to be steady and sure, because the wind/air element in the far reaches of the cosmos is calm and unwaveringly steady as well as eternal, infinite and omnipresent. Therefore, the word Samvatsar refers to the fixed life span of a creature.

The significance of the word 'Samvatsar' used here in the context of Prajapati and his sixteen Kalaas is that it implies that whatever is visible in this world—like the moon in this example—will perpetually change and finally come to an end one day. In other words, everything that has been created and would come to an end, including the creator Prajapati himself, has a fixed life span symbolised by the word Samvatsar, which literally means 'one year'. The word 'one' symbolises completion of one cycle of birth and death. That which is not visible, that which is not apparent, is eternal like the invisible part of the moon as well as its completely dark disk on the sixteenth night is the 'true' nature or face of the creature, and it is the God called Brahm. The moon 'is' there in the dark night also, but no one can see it. Because no one can see the dark disc of the moon it does not mean that the moon is not there. Similarly, the moon increases in its shining form during the waxing phase, and its disc gets progressively reduced in shape and brilliance during the waning phase, but this does not mean that the moon is actually increasing or decreasing in size or shape. Likewise, the Atma, represented by Prajapati, is constantly and perpetually there in an unchanging, eternal and universal form, but no one can see it just like no one can see the dark disc of the moon though it is very much there in existence in the sky. The Atma resides inside the body of a creature, the body which takes birth as an infant, progressively increases in size and form, it acquires strength and fame, becomes old and decays, and finally dies. But this does not affect true nature of the Atma at all. The Atma leaves this body and enters into another in the form of a new infant

being born. Hence the simile with the moon is very apt for the Atma represented by Prajapati.

²This refers to the dark disc of the moon which is its true and fundamental form because the moon shines as a result of the sun's rays that fall upon its surface as it has no illumination of its own. Though the dark moon is not seen from the earth but it nevertheless is there in the sky; merely being not visible does not deprive the moon of its physical existence and its place amongst the heavenly bodies in the sky. The word Dhruv refers to this basic and unchanging fact about the truthful form of the moon which is its fundamental form that remains stable and is not subject to the sun's rays falling upon it. In other words, what we observe as a waxing and waning moon is an optical illusion which has nothing to do with the real shape of the moon. Its real shape is the one that appears on the dark moon night, which we can't see. This shape is disc-like without illumination. This is the greatest paradox—that what we see is, in reality, not the truth, for the truth is beyond sight.

Likewise, the essential truth about the creature's 'pure and truthful self' is an irrefutable and stable Truth known as the pure conscious Atma. Similarly, the vital life-creating fundamental elements of creation such as the wind or air, the water, the fire, the sky and the earth elements that form the body of the creature are also stable and they do not perish with its death. The notion of birth and death is like the waxing and waning phases of the moon, while the dark disc is like the infinite nature of the truthful and essential form of the creature's true self. Here, the birth of a creature, its attaining its pinnacle of glories and its ultimate decline and death are compared to the waxing moon, the full moon and the waning phase respectively. The fundamental and principal form of the moon, called its 'Dhruva' form because it does not undergo any change, refers to the basic nature of the 'true self' of the creature as its unchanging and stable Atma.

From the metaphysical point of view, this metaphor of the 'waxing and waning moon' and its 'dark disc' refers to the fact that the Pran and the Atma of the creature, which refer to the vital wind/air and the pure conscious Soul respectively, are basically eternal and sublime entities like the moon. Depending upon the level of enlightenment and wisdom symbolised by the light of the sun's rays that fall upon the moon's surface, a creature can become mortal or immortal. That is, if the creature has attained a higher level of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment then it would realise that its 'true self', the Atma which is pure consciousness, is an eternal and imperishable entity like the moon which though not visible during the dark night is however there. Such creatures have an eclectic and holistic view and know that they never take a birth or die but simply assume one body after another depending upon their involvement in the various deeds done by the body in any given life. So they would endeavour to break free from this cycle and attain the stable and everlasting stature known as emancipation and salvation of their souls by merging it with its primary source, the supreme Soul of creation or Brahm. They would acquire such virtues as those possessed by the elements—viz. the stupendous energy and powers of the fire element, the force and potentials of the wind/air element, the vastness and omnipresence of the sky element, and the all-sustaining and all-bearing qualities of the water and the earth element.

But on the other hand, if the creature is ignorant of these fundamental principles about the Atma and its true self, then it thinks that it takes a birth as symbolised by the waxing phase of the moon, and it gets old and dies as represented by the waning phase. The various qualities that it possesses, metaphorically called its Kalaas, also undergo change depending upon its temperament and circumstantial compulsions.

Similarly, the unique eternal Brahm is also not visible like the dark disc of the moon during the dark night. This Brahm can be therefore ascertained only by intelligent inference from what is visible even as we deduce that the moon is present even during the

dark night because we have seen it grow from the crescent shape to the full disc and then decline to another crescent shape before it vanishes the next night of the dark moon. When the moon reemerges the next night, ignorant people think that the moon has been born anew, but wise ones know that the moon is always there and it is visible simply because the sun's light has once again made it visible, and its shape changes because of the angle by which it is viewed from the earth. The very fact that this creation keeps on pulsating between death and birth proves that there must be some subtle and mysterious authority that outlasts it and controls things when all the visible forces have ceased to function and come to rest. This esoteric, unseen and enigmatic authority is Brahm in which everything collapses at the time of conclusion and from which it reemerges again during the next phase of creation. This supreme and beyond comprehension entity is Dhruv because it possesses such eclectic qualities as being truthful, eternal, unwavering, stable, unchangeable, immutable and irrefutable. Everything else changes but Brahm doesn't.

The 'night' is dark symbolising the veil of darkness representing delusions and ignorance that are the hallmarks of this mortal world in which the creature lives. The growth of the shape of the disc of the moon symbolises the growth of the creature from birth right up to its adulthood when it has reached its maturity and attains its maximum glory and reaches its pinnacle of achievements. Then the decline begins with old age, and it finally culminates in death when the moon's disc vanishes only to remerge the next night signifying the re-birth of the creature with a new body. This cycle shows that the creature's existence and its body are not stable; they change every now and then. But when the Pran ultimately merges with the cosmic wind or air element signifying the liberation and deliverance of the creature from the cycle of birth and death, the creature vanishes from sight for good just like the dark moon's disc. In that particular night when the dark disc of the moon is there in the sky, no one sees it though the moon is there. Likewise, when the Pran merges with the cosmic Soul then the spirit of the wise man becomes stable like the polar star which does not change every night like the moon. This is referred to as the sixteenth Kalaa of the moon.

This stanza can be interpreted in a different way as follows—the moon representing the Prajapati increases during the fifteen nights of the waxing phase of the moon, and decreases during the next fifteen nights of the waning phase of the moon respectively. That Prajapati becomes death like (i.e. dark, non-visible, foreboding) in his sixteenth Kalaa during the night of the dark moon, and he re-emerges the next morning as a new moon. That is, during the night of the dark moon, the Prajapati has ended his previous life represented by the waxing and waning phases of the moon. It has virtually died that night, but not actually so for it reappears once again as a new moon the next night. That is why this dark moon night is called the sixteenth Kalaa, or the phase that indicates that Prajapati, who is symbolised by the moon here, is basically eternal, steady and non-changing. It only appears to change in form, size and shape, but this change is merely an optical illusion, because as science has proved, the moon actually remains unchanging in its shape but appears to change its shape and location in the sky only because of the shadow of the earth that falls on it as well as the angle at which it is viewed from the earth with relevance to the position of the sun.

Hence, the Pran of the creature representing its Atma or Brahm also is eternal and unchanging like the truthful form of the moon, but the different bodies that the creature assumes are only due to the erroneous perceptions it has of its true self and the world in which it lives. The word 'night' is also significant here because the darkness of the night indicates the ignorance and delusions that engulf the creature during its existence in this world. That is also why the moon has been selected here instead of the sun because the

latter is a metaphor for light of knowledge as well as for the illumination of enlightenment and wisdom which would finally eliminate all darkness of ignorance.

³(a) The moon changes every night, and each shape of the moon is known as its Kalaa. On the other hand, the sun does not change in its shape, and therefore it does not exhibit any Kalaas. Similarly, a man is known to have Kalaas which refer to his different qualities and virtues.

The word 'Kalaa' has many connotations. It inter alia means shape, form, especial qualities, art, craft, skills, expertise, attributes etc.; a division, portion, phase or degree; any kind of discharge; brilliance, magnificence and grandeur; fraud, deceit and trick; maverick and supernatural powers. It also refers to—(a) the sixteenth part of the moon's diameter/disc, or one of the various phases of the moon; (b) the twelfth part of the sun's diameter/disc; (c) the division of time equivalent to about eight seconds; (d) one degree out of the three hundred and sixty degrees. So when this term 'Kalaa' is applied to that supreme Truth, also known as the supreme Brahm, it implies that it is so grand, so majestic, so magnificent, so stupendous that it transcends the definitions or parameters set by this particular word. That Truth or Brahm is beyond their reach and dimension; these various connotations of the word cannot either be applied to that Truth or Brahm nor can they define it in its entirety in any way.

(b) The sixteen Kalaas of a man are his different attributes, strengths, qualities and virtues. Since a man is an exact replica of the 'Viraat Purush', who in turn is a subtle manifestation of the sublime Brahm, these sixteen qualities or attributes of a man refer to the sixteen qualities of Brahm himself. These qualities or attributes are the following — (i) Shraddha (faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect, devotion), (ii) Pran (life; the very essence of creation; the vibrations of life; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life), (iii) Akash (the all-pervading, all-encompassing sky or space element), (iv) Vayu (wind, air element), (v) Tej (energy, splendour, radiance, glory, might, majesty and fire element; see also section 2, 5 and 6), (vi) Apaha (water element which is the all-important ingredient for life—see also section 5 and 6) (vii) 'Prithivi' (earth element which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation —see also section 5 and 6) (viii) Indriya (the organs of the body, both the organs of perception as well as of action), (ix) Mana (mind and heart and their stupendous potentials —see also section 5 and 6), (x) Anna (food, the element without which life is simply not imaginable because it provides it with the basic nourishment and energy —see also section 5 and 6), (xi) Virya (semen, sperms, standing for courage, valour, potency, vitality and prowess), (xii) Tapa (austerity and penance, forbearance and tolerance of hardships, carrying out strict religious vows) (xiii) Mantra (the ability to give good advise, the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, logically arrive at a conclusion), (xiv) Karma (taking actions and doing deeds), (xv) Loka (worldly interactions and behaviours), and (xvi) Naam (good name, fame, reputation, honour and glory).

In simple terms it means that a person's total composite personality, his characteristic attributes and individuality, his vitality and stamina, his prowess, powers and strength, his drive and vigour et al can be divided into sixteen parts.

The 'moon' has been used in this verse as an analogy to explain the fact that the Atma or Pran, represented by Prajapati, only changes its form or external body like the waxing and waning phases of the moon, but it does not undergo any actual change whatsoever in its true, basic and real form. The apparent changes that appear in the Atma are because the Atma assumes different bodies according to the deeds done by it in its previous life. But these forms are all misleading; if these myriad forms that the Atma assumes as its habitat are considered to be its truthful identity, then this is a completely erroneous and fallacious conception.

⁴One fears a policeman when one commits any sort of violence. When the supreme policeman in the shape of the supreme Authority known as Brahm and his representative the Atma is present at all times, even when and even though it is not visible, should not the creature fear him while causing harm or injury to another creature by killing it? Would there be no fear of punishment for such a heinous crime as murder done in the witness of the supreme authority, the Pran or Atma of the self? Again, this moon is regarded as the patron deity of Pran as is clearly mentioned in verse no. 13. So even though the moon is not visible during the dark night, by killing any creature a person is insulting the patron deity of Pran which also resides in his own bosom. Would such an act go without punishment? Is it not an insult of the patron deity of the Pran, i.e. the moon, when the man kills and harms the Pran of another creature, especially when the same Pran is present inside his own bosom and is giving him his life? Hence, it is ordained and expected that one should and would not kill during the dark night of the moon.

The most important observation here is that one should not kill because life is immortal. No one can darken the moon before its time for it to become dark by itself own self. So no one has the right to snuff out the Pran or the life of any particular individual creature from its body as long as the Atma has not reached the proper time to leave that body on its own accord. If one indulges in such acts, then it is indeed an unpardonable sin.]

15. The Samvatsar which has sixteen Kalaas (forms or shape or aspect) is surely Prajapati who is personified as the man who is enlightened about the esoteric secret behind this Prajapati¹.

‘Vitta’ or worldly wealth, assets and property represent its fifteen Kalaas, while the Atma or its fundamental truthful ‘self’ is its sixteenth Kalaa². In the world, a man’s position in society rises and falls in direct proportion to his rising and falling fortunes. The various Kalaas are like the outer ring of the wheel while the Atma is like the hub or axle of that wheel. That is why if a man loses every asset or wealth in this world and becomes bankrupt, but retains his life or Pran in the form of the Atma inside his body, he considers himself very fortunate³ (15).

[Note--¹This creator Prajapati has manifested himself as a human being. Just like the Prajapati, the man also needs food for himself and his progeny which represents the Prajapati’s creation. The grand virtues or Kalaas that Prajapati possessed are also possessed by the man, and he is called Samvatsar (literally one year) because he has a fixed life span, and one life of his is equivalent to one complete year because it involves birth, rise to the top of his youth and adulthood at the height of which he acquires the maximum of wealth and fame, and then his decline and death. As has been explained in note to verse no.14 above, the different phases of the moon are also metaphors for this phenomenon.

²The fifteen Kalaas are metaphors for the different qualities and virtues that a man possesses as described in note of the previous verse. These Kalaas can increase and decrease according to various factors; they give him fame and respect in the world. These qualities are visible and observed by the world. So they are like the visible phases of the moon as described in verse no. 14. If by chance he loses one or all of them, he can strive to cultivate them once again and regain his lost stature. But this is possible only as long as he lives and has Pran in his body. That is why it is said that if the Atma survives, everything survives. This Pran or Atma is eternal and imperishable, it does not decay and

die like the rest of the Kalaas. Therefore it is referred to as the sixteenth Kalaa which is the hidden eternal quality of being eternal and everlasting. Further, the fifteen Kalaas are visible like the various faces of the moon, while the sixteenth is concealed as the esoteric Truth symbolised by the dark face of the moon.

Obviously the entity that increases or decreases, enhances or decays, rises and falls, is definitely not the Atma. Then what is it? It is the physical body that the Atma assumes, and even if the body decays and dies, even if the body suffers and falls prey to bad times, for a wise, erudite and enlightened man it matters not as long as his Atma is healthy and robust. That is, as long as his Atma is not corrupted and influenced by the delusions that are so rampant in this world and an integral part of it, the man is not considered lost. On the other hand, if he has allowed his Atma or his true self to fall prey to worldly vices and perversions then he is deemed to be a lost case even though he might have a healthy and robust body which is well fed and handsome.

³Of such a body (which is compared to a wheel here), the Atma is like the axle (the central point upon which the wheel rotates), and the wealth is the outer circumference of this wheel. That is why it is said that if a person loses everything (i.e. if he loses all his assets and wealth which had been sustaining him in this materialistic world) and retains the vital strength, energy and the will power that are inherent qualities of the Atma, giving him courage, resilience, perseverance, steadfastness, firmness of resolution and determination, he is harmed only in a superficial and perfunctory way (i.e. his inner core remains intact, and the loss of his worldly physical assets do not harm him or affect his mental peace or demean his spirits or break his determination and strength in the long run at all. He might be shocked for a few days, but with the strength of his Atma, he soon picks himself up and moves ahead in life with renewed vigour. With hard work and diligent enterprise, he can produce the assets once again; even surpass what he had possessed earlier. But if there was no Atma in him, giving him the needed courage, strength, encouragement and vigour as well as firmness of resolution and determination to fight on, he would have crumbled and fallen apart literally. This proves that the Atma is at the core of the assets that a man possesses in the world; in fact, the Atma is his real wealth. If a person retains the courage and self-confidence provided by his Atma, he can tide over all difficulties.

Further, the various qualities that the Atma possesses are like the spokes of the wheel of which the Atma is the hub or axle. If the hub or axle is broken, the spokes or the peripheral ring of the wheel have no value; their relevance is dependent on the proper functioning of the axle or the hub. If there was no such thing as the Atma or the pure conscious soul of the creature, then none of the qualities or virtues have any relevance because a dead body which has no Atma or soul in it has no use of any of these qualities. We note that this verse is a practical advice to mankind to face all adversities with courage, fortitude and resilience. Thus we find that these two verses, nos. 14 and 15, are sterling examples of how Upanishads are not merely theoretical metaphysical discussions of hypothetical and imaginary concepts, but are very practical in their approach to the problems faced by a creature in his day to day life. They give him sane advice.]

16. There are indeed three Lokas (worlds)—the world inhabited by humans called the ‘Manushya Loka’, the world of spirits where dead ancestors reside called the Pitri Loka, and the world of Gods called the Dev Loka.

The world of human beings can be vanquished and conquered by means of sons and not by anyone else; the world of the forefathers and ancestors can be vanquished and conquered by deeds; and the world of Gods can be vanquished and conquered by Vidya (knowledge, erudition, learning and scholarship). Out of these worlds, the one of Gods

(Dev Loka) is considered as the best one, and that is why Vidya (acquisition of knowledge) is said to be the best thing to do, and it is lauded also for this reason (16).

[Note--The world of humans can be vanquished by sons because the son helps his father to accomplish things that the latter had not been able to do himself. The father needs his son to help him with his worldly affairs. History has many examples when the son had done much better and spread the fame of his father much more than the father might have done himself. The son accomplishes unfinished tasks of this father and helps to carry forward his legacy.

Similarly, the world of spirits can be conquered by doing deeds, because if a man does good and noble deeds while he is alive, he will not remain in the lower rungs of the heaven where the spirits live, but he will get final Moksha, or attain emancipation and salvation of his soul, which means that he will rise above the abode of spirits, called the Pitri Loka, and go to the ultimate heaven, called the Brahm Loka.

The world of Gods can be conquered by Vidya, or knowledge, because all the Gods represent the various sense organs of the body and its functions. With proper knowledge, a man is able to understand and realise the falsehood of this material world and futility of pursuing this deluding mirage. This fills him with renunciation and he stops himself from gratifying his natural instincts and natural temperaments. Instead, he diverts his attention towards his true self, the Atma, which is a representative of Brahm, and this provides him with the bliss and contentedness of self-realisation. Such a man is not a serf of the sense organs which are the symbolic abodes of different Gods. This is a metaphoric way of saying that he has conquered the Gods with his Vidya.]

17. Now, 'Samprati' is being described here. [The word 'Samprati' here refers to the act of initiation of the son 'at this time', or 'at this moment' as described now.]

When the father reaches a state when either he realises that the time of his death is approaching, or when he wishes to retire from active role and regards himself as an advisor to his son and lets the latter take care of the routine of daily life, its business and the affairs of the household (i.e. when the father is old and ready to pass on the baton to his heir), he calls his son near him and says, 'Oh son! You are Brahm, you are Yagya (fire sacrifice) and you are my Loka (world) personified'.

The son answers him by saying, 'I am Brahm, I am Yagya, I am the Loka¹'.

Whatever truthful knowledge that exists in this creation pertains to one truth, and it is about the supreme transcendental Brahm².

Likewise, all endeavours in the world are covered by a single word 'Yagya', literally meaning any sacred ceremony or sacrifice³.

Similarly, all the Lokas (worlds) are one and covered by the single word 'Loka⁴'.

This is the duty of the householder. Every father wishes that his son would obey him. Hence, an educated and cultured son obeys his father and follows the rules of conduct as laid down by the scriptures and as instructed by his father. He does things righteously, auspiciously, honestly and diligently. He is therefore known by the term 'Lokya' (i.e. that which is worth seeing or observing; one that is worth praising, honouring and lauding).

A father who is wise and erudite and knows all these established procedures and follows them, then at the time of his departure from this mortal world (i.e. at the time of his death), he subtly and symbolically establishes himself, or leaves his identity and fingerprint behind in the form of his son (i.e. he passes on his responsibilities and his

virtues to his son who is his heir and his true image like the father who was an image of the supreme creator Brahm.]

If due to some reason certain work is left unfinished by the father, then his son finishes off the task for him (after the father's death when the son taken charge). This is how a father's fame and glory are established and perpetuated in this world through his son.

What leaves with the father is his pure, Amrit-like Pran, i.e. the person who dies does not take anything from this world with him; everything is left behind. The only thing that goes with him is his Pran which is his vital wind and which is his true identity as his Atma which has no encumbrances. One must realise this fact⁵ (17).

[Note—¹The father advises his son to follow the righteous path leading to Brahm and to realise the fact the he is as holy, as auspicious, as eternal and as majestic and powerful as the supreme Brahm. The wise father has realised in the first instance that he is a personified Prajapati and now the time has come to initiate his son into the wisdom of which he was privy till now. After all, the intention of Prajapati was to propagate the creation in his own likeness, and this fundamental knowledge should be passed on by the present Prajapati, i.e. the father, to the next generation of Prajapati, i.e. the son. The subtle meaning of the use of the word Prajapati in this Brahman in relation to the creator is very clear in the context of this verse.

So the father advises his son to realise the fact he is not an ordinary mortal, but an exalted soul, i.e. that he is none but the supreme Brahm personified. This is true because the Atma of the creature is his true identity, and this Atma is a manifestation of Brahm. Then he advises him to uphold the sanctity of the different sacraments and religious duties and do them diligently by telling him that he is the Yagya personified. In other words, he advises his son to lead a righteous and auspicious life and treat his entire life as one big holy sacrifice itself.

And by telling him that he represents the world, the father blesses his son to be successful in acquiring fame and glory in the world. The son should endeavour to enhance the good name of his father and carry forward the unaccomplished and unfinished tasks of the father and endeavour to complete or accomplish them himself. The son on his part accepts the inheritance and instructions of his father, and promises to fulfill them and live up to his father's expectations.

²In other words, the father advises the son to have equanimity of outlook and treat everyone alike, not to distinguish between a rich man and the poor man, to treat all the creatures equally with compassion and kindness because all of them are manifestation of the same Brahm.

³That is, the father advises his son to do his work selflessly as an offering to the sacred fire, as an oblation meant for the Gods, and treat all his deeds and actions as a holy, noble and religious exercise. The son should think that even his routine daily work is an offering to the fire sacrifice. This would automatically ensure that his deeds become consciously pure, auspicious and holy.

⁴The son is advised by his father that he should see no distinction between any two kinds of habitats. The son should be happy and contented with his present circumstances and not feel depressed or jealous when he sees others in a more prosperous and comfortable situation. This stanza has two connotations—viz. the son should treat all creatures, the humblest worm, insect and other lowly creature that live under the ground and even in the sky with the same attitude as he treats noble kings and exalted Brahmins. The other meaning is that he should treat his small house as being as comfortable and pleasant as the huge house of a rich man. He should never feel dejected or humiliated that

he is not rich enough to possess vast mansions, for even a hermit's hut is comfortable for him. So we observe here that, for all practical purposes, the father assumes the role of a teacher and guide for his son.

⁵Similar ideas of the father passing on his worldly responsibilities to his son are expressed in detail in Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad, canto 2, verse no. 11 of the Rig Veda tradition.]

18. A person's power of speech has the element of earth and fire in it¹. The faculty of speech is said to possess divine qualities only when what one says is fulfilled², otherwise it becomes a boast (18).

[Note—¹The faculty of speech is like the earth because it has the gravity, density, and the virtues of reliability, stability and sustainability like that of the earth. Besides this, the faculty of speech is said to subtly harbour the fire element like the earth which also harbours the fire in its vast bosom. It is on it that a man depends for his existence and interactions with others in this world; he relies upon it to express his views and emotions as well as to learn what others have to say and what they think. A man relies more on what an eye witness says about an event than on what he has read about it somewhere. It is a solid proof of a man's knowledge, wisdom and erudition when he speaks wise words using his faculty of speech; others depend on what a wise man advises them. It has gravity when one is serious about anything he says, and such words are not to be ignored. We often consult seniors when we are in doubt, and this process of discussing and consulting as well as telling also involves the faculty of speech.

This faculty of speech is like the fire because it has the elementary qualities of fire. It is as energetic, potent, powerful, fierce and forceful, and at times scorching, like the fire. A leader's powerful speech can turn the tide of history; it can arouse emotions and lead to great turmoil; it can even cause wars and animosity; it can fire revolutionary spirits in others and inspire them to act when all other means might have failed.

In short, this faculty is the only means by which a man expresses himself and makes great changes in the world and the way the people think and act by his words which are not limited only to his present immediate surroundings but even to the time in the distant future.

²That is, futile chatter is not the proper use of this faculty of speech. It should rather be used for purposeful purposes for which the supreme creator had created it, and the larger benefit of the society is one of them. If the energy of the speech is wasted in tattling or gossiping, it is deemed that the fire element in it is being insulted. If it is used for accomplishing worldly gains, which are nevertheless perishable, at the cost of other creatures and at the cost of demeaning one's own Atma and its glorious stature, then the earth element is being insulted. To use this faculty of speech in the wrong way, such as to cause harm to other creatures by giving false witness, then it is tantamount to its insinuation. See also verse no. 4-7.

Further, it is this faculty that the father uses to give wise advice to his son as described in verse no. 17 above. In other words, the father becomes a de-facto spokes person for Brahm who advises his son through the medium of the faculty of speech to carry on the divine mandate of the Lord forward. Therefore, this speech assumes the glory associated with divinity. See also verse no. 11 in this context.]

19. His Mana (mind) becomes exalted and God-like due to the influences of the Duloka (the heavens where the exalted Gods live) and Aditya (the Sun God). When the mind is activated by the noble spirit representing the glorious virtues of the Gods, and the light of

wisdom, erudition and knowledge symbolised by the brilliant light of the Sun, i.e. when it gets enlightened, it is then that it becomes perpetually happy and blissful, and is never subjected to sorrows and miseries (19).

[Note—See verse no. 12 in this context. The mind of a man is what decides what that man makes of himself in this world because the mind controls all his thinking and actions. The various sense organs are the seats of the various Gods in creation who are none but personifications of the various powers and virtues that the body of the creature exhibits through these sense organs. The mind controls these sense organs, and therefore when it is influenced by noble virtues it is deemed that it has acquired Godly characteristics and would lead its wards, the sense organs, judiciously. The Sun is a metaphor for the light of enlightenment and wisdom in the creature. The Sun God has his abode in its eyes. It is through the eye that the other Gods representing the various sense organs of the body observe and see the outside world, acquires knowledge about it, and this sight gives the creature information that makes him so much the wiser. Therefore the Sun God is enlightening. The mind which has such exalted preceptors is sure to be as virtuous and exalted as them.

Thus, the Mana infused with the high spirit of divinity represented by the heavens and enlightenment represented by the brilliant sun, perpetually remains in a state of bliss; it never suffers from worries and miseries associated with ignorance and delusions of this world.]

20. Possessed of the divine life sustaining, nourishing and enhancing qualities of the water element and the moon (as described in verse no. 13-14 above), the Pran, which is the vital wind that infuses life in all the creatures of this creation, enters the body and empowers the man who represents the God (known as Prajapati)¹.

It is this divine, exalted and majestic Pran that never tapers or feels miserable or sorrowful, and neither does it decay and get destroyed or diminutive in any point of time, whether or not it is flowing inside the body of a living creature².

The wise Atma—which is the truthful identity of the individual creature, is synonymous with it, and is present in all the living creatures universally—that realises the sublime and glorious virtues of this Pran as described here becomes one like it; it becomes synonymous with it³. Therefore, such a person becomes exemplary in his holistic views and outlook of the creation and its creatures.

A person who knows this fact becomes so enlightened that he symbolically becomes similar to the Pran of all the creatures⁴; all of them begin to adore him, revere him as their well-wisher and true friend. All the creatures therefore serve this exalted, erudite, self-realised and wise man as they would serve their own God called Pran; they honour, revere, admire and respect him for the exemplary virtues that he possesses, and the excellent values that he stands for which are similar to the ones exhibited by Pran, Atma and the patron God (Prajapati)⁵.

Worldly creatures remain mired in and engulfed by the numerous miseries and troubles associated with this mortal world and its mundane existence, but those who are wise about the essential and fundamental things in this creation which are the real truths and the absolute realities do not feel miserable in spite of various adversities that they face. Since they have acquired the exalted stature which is equivalent to godliness because of their wisdom, enlightenment and self-realisation, sins and other perversions usually associated with this deluding world do not come near them. In other words, they

remain unaffected and untouched by all the negative qualities and attributes associated with this mundane, artificial and deluding world (20).

[Note—¹In other words, the Pran symbolises the fact that the supreme creator known as Brahm has manifested himself as ‘life’ inside the body of the man whose body would have remained without any consciousness had it not been because of the Pran entering it and empowering it with the consciousness called life.

²The Pran is a term used to denote ‘life’ in all living creatures, whether they are mobile creatures such as the animals or immobile such as the plants. Obviously, the Pran is mobile in the members of the animal kingdom because they breathe (by inhaling and exhaling the Pran wind), pass wind both up as belching and coughing (Udaan wind), and down as flatus and the passage of stool (Apaan wind); they also get up and move about (Udaan wind); they have an active circulation system and a body that is full and robust (Samaan and Vyan wind). On the other hand, amongst plants this Pran remains in an immobile state because the plants do not move about and show other signs of activity as usually depicted by their animal brethren.

The Pran refers to the sublime vital winds that sustain life in the creation by being subtly present both inside as well as outside the body of the living being. Though the wind or air is inherently mobile and agile, it does not show any apparent signs of activity inside the body because it is packed tightly by other organs. Outside the body also, this wind/air sometimes appear to be absolutely static giving the feeling of stuffiness, but at other times it can roar and howl as during severe storms.

³That is, when the Atma becomes enlightened about the sublime nature of the vital wind called the Pran which is the only factor that lends ‘life’ to the otherwise dead and inane body of the creature in which the Atma lives, the latter realises the relevance, importance and significance of the Pran for its very existence in this world, because if there was no Pran the body would be dead, and the Atma would have no habitat for its self to live in.

The Atma is pure consciousness while the Pran is the life of a creature; they are the two aspects of the same coin. Without consciousness the creature has no relevance for the Pran, and life has no meaning if the creature has no Atma or soul in him. That is why they are synonymous terms; they both are equally important and significant, equally relevant, meaningful and vital for existence to sustain. Whether the Atma or Pran live in a man’s body or make their exit from it at the time of his death, they do not lose their fundamental characteristic of being eternal, infinite and imperishable as well as of being eternally contented and satisfied which gives them the sublime virtue of blissfulness.

The Pran is that divine and sublime entity that has the potential of being able to empower a lifeless body with consciousness, while the Atma is the supreme resident authority in the body of the creature in whose service all the vital winds work.

⁴When it is supposed that the wise man identifies himself with the rest of the creatures, it means that he treats all the creatures alike and shares their sorrows and miseries. He does not treat himself as being in anyway superior to others; he has no sense of ego or false self pride. He does not think that he is in anyway senior, more exalted and has a higher standing in the social hierarchy and should therefore not mix with others who are poor and downtrodden. He does not live a cloistered life in a world of make-belief seniority and superiority, and instead identifies himself more with the ordinary people and lives amongst them as one of them, and shares their happiness and miseries. This would normally entail his becoming as miserable and sorrowful as these creatures because he empathises with them. But this does not actually happen and he remains ever contented and blissful inspite of living in a sea of sorrows around him because he is enlightened and wise about the actual truth behind the false façade of this deluding world

whereas the rest of the creatures aren't—he realises that these sorrows and sufferings are felt because the creature thinks this world to be real and its gross physical body as its true self which is subjected to sorrows and sufferings, instead of seeing through the smokescreen of falsehood and realising the futility and illusionary nature of this conception. This is because neither the body is the 'true self', nor the 'true self' suffers because of the sufferings of the body. The true self or the Atma is beyond such influences.

In spite of remaining detached from everything, he is still full of mercy and compassion for others. He is a pious soul who worries for others as much as he worries for his own self.

The Holy Bible says—'I am the good shepherd, and the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep' (St. John, 10/11.) 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hands. My father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand' (St. John, 10/27-29.)

⁵In other words, he becomes wise and erudite enough to guide all other people with whom he comes in contact. These people would have remained as stupid and like dead wood, spending their life in vain pursuits had it not been their good fortune that they have come in contact with him. It is a metaphoric way of saying that such a wise man infuses and injects the vital spark of enlightenment, wisdom and knowledge in those people who would have been otherwise ignorant and stupid. That is, he makes their lives meaningful and fruitful which is a way of saying that he becomes their Pran or life. The people look up to him in their hour of sorrows and miseries for solace and succour. A life that is lived righteously and auspiciously, that is used to serve the creation and its creatures instead of indulging in self gratification and enjoyment of sensual pleasures is actually 'lived', while that which does not observe this noble principal is as good as 'not lived'. A wise man who has served others is remembered reverentially for eternity as opposed to those who lead a selfish life which is inconsequential and worthless for others.

Such a wise man also becomes as exalted as that God called Prajapati, the supreme creator who is the patriarch of this creation, because he is selfless in his temperaments and treats everyone alike; he gives equal importance to all forms of life and provides sustenance and succour to all the creatures of creation without distinguishing between them based on their colour, caste, creed, birth, beliefs and faith etc.]

21. [This verse deals with the concept of 'Vrat', which literally means a resolve, a vow and a firm determination to do anything. Here it refers to the various habits of the sense organs of the body, and elucidates upon which one out of them should be our ideal habit, which one should be followed and admired by a creature.]

Now we shall discuss about 'Vrat'. Prajapati Brahma created deeds (or the organs that perform various deeds) after creation. The organs began having envy and jealousy with each other; each treated the other as its rival and there was a stiff competition for superiority amongst them, thereby creating unnecessary friction and animosity between them.

The faculty of speech declared (or made a resolve) that it would always speak. The eyes said that it would always see. Likewise, the ears insisted that it would continue to hear. Similarly, all the organs took a vow, or each one of them made a resolution according to their capacity and aptitude.

The Death God, in the form of weariness, tiredness, fatigue, lethargy and despondency as well as inertia and indolence caught hold of and corrupted them all; it

virtually cast its dark shadow represented by the negative traits mentioned above upon them, as a result of which the organs lost their original vigour, vitality and stamina. That is why we find that the faculty of speech gets tired when a man talks too much for too long. Likewise, the eyes and ears also get tired and fatigued in due course of time (and that is why one has to close the eyes if he works with it for any length of time without giving it rest). It is also why at the time of death of the body all these organs cease to function.

But this Death God could not cast its evil influence upon the medium which makes these organs actually work and have their consciousness as well as their importance, i.e. the medium called 'Pran'¹.

That is why, Pran never tires and feels weary and fatigued (i.e. a person never tires of breathing. He may tire of seeing, of hearing and of speaking, but he never gets fed up of breathing. In fact, if he stops breathing, he would die instantly).

This made all other sense organs realise the supremacy of Pran. This is because whether or not the Pran flows inside the body (as described in verse no. 20), it never gets tired, it never decays, it never diminishes in its vitality and stamina, and it never comes to an end.

Therefore, all the organs decided to become like the Pran (i.e. they decided that henceforth they would regard themselves as dependants of the Pran God and use his name as their surname), and that is why the word 'Pran' is used also for all these organs singly as well as collectively². The organs are therefore collectively and individually known as Pran; Pran is an epithet to describe all the organs as well as their surname and title.

A person who knows this fact becomes so respected and considered senior amongst his peers that the family to which he belongs acquires his name; the line of his heirs assume his name as their title or surname. Those who are opponents of such an erudite, sagacious, wise and scholarly man are put to shame; they virtually wither away and vanish into oblivion.

This view about Pran is called the 'spiritual philosophy pertaining to Pran' or the 'Pran's Adhyatma-Darshan' (21).

[Note--¹The Pran is the basic life sustaining factor that enables all the organs of the body to function. The adjective 'medium' is used to define that basic driving force that is the agency, the means and the intervening force that enables the organs of the body to function. The Pran injects 'life' in the otherwise inane and lifeless organs. Had it not been for the Pran, none of the organs would have been able to perform their task—e.g. the eye would not have been able to see, the ears would not have been able to hear, and the tongue or the mouth would not have been able to taste and speak. This Pran is therefore superior to all the organs. This fact has been clearly laid out in Canto 1, Brahman 3, verse nos. 1-23, as well as verse nos. 20 and 22 of the present Brahman. Besides this, Canto 3, Brahman 7, verse nos. 2-23 describes the same concept in relation with the Atma which is like the Pran pervading through the creation.

²The different sense organs who earlier had thought that they had independent origin which was superior to that of the other organ, and that they have their own working abilities which was far more important and significant than their brethren's, now decided to become blood brothers and trace their lineage from one superior God called Pran. Even as a man attaches the name of his forefathers after or before his own independent name, these organs came to be collectively known as 'Pran'.

Since Pran is synonymous with life and vitality and stamina, we say that the man is able to see because the organ of sight, i.e. the eye, has 'Pran' or life in it. This is evident in the fact that when a person dies, his eye is present in his body but he is not able to see because his Pran has made its exit from his body. This logic applies to all the other organs too.

When one is hit severely and, say, his eyes are blinded, he says 'Oh my God, my eyes hurt so much that I feel my 'Pran' has left my body. In this case, the word Pran is used as a metaphor for the eye. This expression that his 'eyes are hurting so much that he feels that his Pran has left his body' is an expression of the intensity of pain that he feels in his eye when it is gravely hurt and wounded. The phrase usually used for expressing utmost distress when any organ is harmed is 'my Pran appears to be leaving my body, and I am immensely distressed'.]

22. [Verse no. 21 described the resolve made by the organs of the body and their ultimate realisation that Pran was the senior most amongst them. This discussion was at the micro level of creation, i.e. at the level of the individual body. Now this verse deals with the same concept as it is applied to the different Gods who preside over this vast creation at the macro level.]

Now the philosophy called 'Adhidaivat' is being elaborated upon. The Fire God made a resolve that it would continue to burn. The Sun resolved that it would continue to provide heat and energy perpetually. The Moon decided that it would also shine indefinitely. Similarly, all the other Gods made firm resolves depending upon their individual abilities, aptitudes, prowess, acumen, potentials and designated authority. Just like the Pran is established as the supreme, sublime, most important and the vital but subtle force amid the organs of the body (as described in verse no. 21), the primary form of Pran known as the 'wind or air element' personified as the Wind God is the paramount and most significant God (factor) amongst the Gods at the macro level of creation, being eternal and infinite as well as all-pervading and omnipresent¹.

This is because the other Gods come to an end sooner or later, but the Wind God does not² (22).

[Note—¹The wind/air pervades throughout the length and breadth of the space of the sky. All the Gods, such as the Sun, the Moon and the Fire are present in the sky, but they have a localized existence. Though the Fire can be present everywhere in a subtle form, but in the context of the Sun it is present in this particular entity in a visible form because the Sun appears to be a crucible of eternally burning fire. But compared to them, the wind or the air element is never visible though it is ever present everywhere. Even the fire needs the air to keep its self burning. The fire can be put out by a strong gust of wind, but the wind cannot be harmed by the fire. Since this air element is synonymous with 'life' of everything that exists, it follows that it is also the life of the Gods as well.

²The Wind God represents the air element that pervades throughout the sky; it is present everywhere. Even after the visible world comes to an end, this element would continue to live in the post-destructive phase of creation. That is why we say that after life comes to an end on this planet, the cosmic wind fills the space formed by the void left behind by the extinct world and howls across it. This is evident in war fields and in deserts where there is no trace of life; it is observed that a fierce wind blows there, howling ominously. So this wind/air continues to be eternally present in the sky and continues to blow perpetually and indefinitely even after the end of this world. It is universally and uniformly present everywhere in equal proportion. It cannot be said that

the air is less here and more there; it is only due to its movement that we regard it as being less here and more active there.

The Sun sets in the evening, the Moon waxes and wanes, the Fire can be extinguished, but the wind always remains present everywhere till eternity—whether it is felt when it blows as during a storm, or not felt when it is static as in a closed room— as far as the space of the sky extends.]

23. There is the following Shloka (a scriptural verse establishing the veracity of a particular axiom or maxim)—‘This Aditya (the Sun God) rises from the same place where it sets’. That is, it rises from the Pran and it sets in the Pran itself. All the Gods have similarly followed this rule of rising from the vital wind called Pran, which is a metaphor for life and consciousness, and then finding their rest in it¹.

This rule that the Gods resolved to follow then is being followed by them even now, and shall be followed by them in the future also.

This establishes the maxim that one should adhere to his ‘Dharma’ (i.e. one should diligently stick to the righteous path chosen by him according to the prescription of the scriptures that is auspicious and noble) from start to finish. [That is, one should be resolute and firm in following righteousness and virtuousness notwithstanding the difficulties that one has to face because of this firm resolution. This is because ‘the works that I do in my father’s name, they bear witness of me’—Bible, St. John, 10/25; ‘Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk as ye have us for an example’ (Philippians, 3/16-17)].

One should exercise control over one’s Pran and Apan winds (i.e. the breath flowing through the nostrils and the wind moving down the intestines respectively by the process called ‘Pranayam’ as described in the various Upanishads dealing with Yoga) so that the various sins and perversions and other misdeeds symbolising death, decay and destruction do not touch or even come near the spiritual aspirant’.

The next tenet is — ‘If a person accepts any vow or makes any resolve, he should ensure that he takes it to its natural conclusion or see to it that it is carried out properly and the aim sought is fully achieved’.

By doing so, he obtains the exalted stature which makes him successfully attain the state called Sayujya (i.e. being one like one’s chosen deity) and Salokya (i.e. to be able to live in the abode of the chosen deity in his close proximity)² (23).

[Note—¹When a man sleeps, all his senses withdraw themselves and remain ensconced in the subtle Pran or the vital life present in his sleeping body. When he wakes up, these senses leap back to life and continue with their duties as they had been doing previously. The different Gods are personified forms of the various forces of Nature and the various functions of the different organs of the body of the creature. When the man sleeps he closes his eyes, which is symbolised by the setting of the Sun because the Sun God subtly resides in the eye as its ability to see and its sense of sight. When he wakes up, he first opens his eyes before any other organ become active. This first sign of life is symbolised by the rising Sun. Once the Sun rises in the morning, all the creatures wake up and the daily grind of the humdrum life begins afresh. It is also observed that when the sun sets, a wind begins to blow across the plains and higher reaches of the mountains, giving the impression that the sun is setting in the bowls of the wind thereby physically establishing

the truth of the statement that the 'Sun sets in the wind/air element', or that the Sun God comes to rest in the witness of the Wind God.

This analogy applies to all other Gods also.

²These two concepts have already been explained in this Brahman, especially verse nos. 11-15 and 20-22. A wise man treats himself as one who is possessed of the grand and noble virtues that are the hallmarks of the different Gods. These Gods do not live outside anywhere but in his own self as the various vital functions of his body. They are established in his own self or his own Atma. In other words, he has found closeness with these exalted Gods (Salokya) and become one with them (Sayujya). Since these Gods are the different manifestations of the supreme Brahm himself who is present in the man's own bosom as his Atma (Salokya), it follows that there is no difference between a wise man and these Gods (Sayujya).

The word 'Sayujya' means to have a form which is the same as a person's chosen deity, and the word 'Salokya' means to have a residence in the abode of the chosen deity. The chosen deity in the case of a wise and enlightened man is his Pran. Hence, the wise and enlightened aspirant attempts to merge his pure consciousness, called his Atma which is his true self, with the Pran which is his chosen deity, in the way described here. Once the Atma becomes one like the Pran, or once the distinction between them is removed, the spiritual aspirant also becomes one like the wind element, i.e. he symbolically acquires all the qualities of the wind element. That is, he becomes eternal, imperishable and infinite like the wind element. Therefore, such a person has no pain or suffers any torment at the time of death; he has no fear of death. See verse no. 20 in this context.

When a man follows his auspicious instincts and leads a righteous life, exercises control over his organs and strive to find emancipation and salvation for his soul, then at the time of death he would establish his consciousness represented by the Atma in his Pran which is a metaphor for the vital wind forces of Nature that infuse life in a body. Both these entities, the Atma and the Pran, are eternal, infinite, imperishable, all-pervading and all-encompassing. As a result, such a person makes a quite and calm exit from the body alongside the breath leaving the body for the last time.

In other words, an enlightened person who realises that his Atma is his true conscious self, and the vital wind element of Nature is his life giving Pran, then such a person dies peacefully because his Atma rides piggy-back on the Pran and makes a quiet exit from the body. Such a person neither feels the agony and pain of the dying body nor does he attempt to cling to it because he has long disassociated himself from the notion of the body as his 'self'. Further, the Pran as the wind/air element has a tendency to move out of the limitations imposed by the gross body and find freedom in the open space outside it. The wind does not like to be tied anywhere, and that is why it is only too glad to leave the body and find liberation.

The Holy Bible says the following about the way a righteous man lives his life and fears not death because it is a means of merging oneself with the supreme Brahm—'For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a state betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you (Philippians, 1/21-24). About merging of one's self with Brahm and the fact there is no fundamental distinction between the two, the holy book says—'I and my Father are one' (St. John, 10/30.)]

Canto 6/ Brahman 4

[This Brahman describes the entire process of reproduction cycle. Since this cycle of creation is like one big fire sacrifice (refer Canto 6, Brahman 2, verse no. 9-14), and since reproduction is an important step in it, therefore this reproductive process is also to be treated as one offering into the cosmic fire sacrifice. This reproduction process is a vital link in the chain because without it the process cannot move forward. It is hence not to be regarded as an instrument for fulfillment of carnal instincts but as a divine mandate having all the elements of religiosity and sacredness associated with a fire sacrifice. With this perspective, one gets the bliss and contentedness, the happiness and joys of participating in a holy sacrifice and fulfilling the divine mandate of the supreme Lord instead filling guilty of indulging in sensual gratification of carnal desires. After all, the Upanishads cannot teach one to be passionate, libidinous and lustful. Refer Kaushitaki Brahman Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11, 15 of the Rig Veda tradition in this context.]

1. The earth is like the essence or sap or juice of the five elements called Panch Bhuts (the others being fire, water, air and sky) because it is the earth that forms the basis and foundation upon which the entire edifice of life rests. It is the earth that harbours life in all its myriad forms and vibrant colours and manifestations. Without earth no life can exist in this creation as is proved by the fact that though there are numerous rounded planets in this universe resembling earth but none harbours life in any form; they are merely barren rocky or gaseous globes floating in the cosmos. Since the living being is made up of the five fundamental elements in creation, therefore it is deemed that the earth is the most important and significant amongst them. The phrase 'essence or juice or sap like' is a metaphoric way of giving importance and value to the earth element as the basic and unavoidable ingredient in Nature without which the rest of the edifice would disintegrate and vanish into oblivion.

The essence or sap or juice of earth is the Apaha or water element. This is because without water the earth would also become as barren and rocky globe as the other planets where no life exists. The glories of earth and its beauty lies in its ability to nourish and harbour an astounding array of vibrant life forms, but water is an essential requirement for it as evident in deserts where no life can survive although all the other ingredients are available there. So metaphorically, water is the 'sap' or 'juice' of life.

The life-giving essential property of water is manifested in the form of the medicinal herbs, because these herbs also inject a new lease of life in a diseased body which would have perished (died due to the illness) without them. Therefore, these herbs are like the metaphoric juice or sap or essence or nectar of water.

The flowers are like the essence or sap or juice or nectar of these medicinal herbs because without the flowers no pollens would be produced and no new plants can be grown. Besides this, the flowers produce nectar which is transformed into honey which is another metaphor for life with all its vibrancy, sweetness, virility and vigour. Aside of this, the herbs are recognised by their flowers, and therefore these flowers are like the symbolic sap which helps one to decide which herb to take and which to reject.

The fruit is metaphoric personification of the essence or sap or juice or nectar of the flower because the flower is the harbinger of the fruit; it is in the flower that the fruit of any tree has its basis. The fruit literally draws its sap or essential juice from the flower's nectar and not the other way round. The flowers appear before the fruits on a tree. The fruit contains all the best that the tree has to offer in terms of nourishment and sustenance for life on this earth. Besides this, the fruit has the seed that forms the basis of the next generation of that tree. The fruit is literally the 'offspring' of the flower. It is well known that flowers are of two types—male and female, but the fruit is not.

The Purush (literally a male; a man) is like the sap or essential life giving properties present in the fruit personified; he is an embodiment of all the nourishments that are present in fruit; he represents the essence of fruit and its magnificent life sustaining values. This is because a man produces the sperm, the 'seed', just like the fruit. The man eats fruits (or for that matter any vegetable or plant product) and derives all his dynamism, vitality, vigour, strength and stamina from the nourishing properties of the fruit he has eaten. These virtues and qualities present in man are in essence the glorious potentials and powers of fruit on vivid display. Both represent the glorious reward obtained by the Gods by their doing the fire sacrifice for creation.

Finally, the essential life giving forces and cosmic energy of creation, which have undergone repeated transformations and distillations from one form to another as described above, reveal themselves in the form of the 'Reta' or the sperm present in the vital juice of man in the form of his semen. [Therefore, this semen of a man is like the juice of the fruit of a tree. The essential nutrition in the fruit's juice is represented by the sperm present in the semen; this semen is a metaphor for stamina, strength, virility, potency, fertility, vitality and vigour that the hallmarks of life in this creation. The opposite of it would be death and darkness. The sperm is the 'seed' of the fruit of the tree represented by the man.] (1).

2. Prajapati decided to create an appropriate habitat or a dwelling place where the sperm can be placed. With this purpose in mind, he created the woman and consecrated her lower parts (i.e. her genitals) and prepared them to accept the offering of the male sperm which was then offered to it even as the oblation is made to the pit of the sacrificial fire. That is why even today a woman is adored and worshipped as the one who gives refuge and shelter to everyone, i.e. as a mother of the entire creative process and the creation¹.

Having created the female genitals to accept his sperms when he would eject it, he elongated his male phallus which was as rigid and sturdy as a hardened rock towards the female to transfer his virtues of vitality, vigour, stamina, abilities and strength represented by the male sperm into the womb of the female².

By establishing his essence, i.e. his sperm, into the female, Prajapati was able not only to perpetrate his creation but also established the glory and importance of womanhood in this world³ (2).

[Note--¹A mother is more loving, closer and considerate than the father; her tenderness of heart and her compassion and kindness are legendary as compared to the male parent of a child. A woman is more sentimental and emotional; she would be easily moved by pain and misery of the world than the male. This is because she has been created with the specific purpose of being a shelter and a provider of refuge to the shelter-less and those who are ejected from their natural habitat just like the male sperm which is thrown off by

the male but accepted by the female. And not only that, this powerful instrument symbolising strength, vigour, vitality and stamina would have gone to waste and its astounding potentials never seen the light of day had it not been for the woman who had given it refuge in her womb, nourished it with her own blood, and then brought it forth in this world to shine in its glory. That is why a son owes more to his mother than he does to his father because the latter had actually ejected his son when he was in his primary form as a sperm from his own natural dwelling in the body of the father, and then he was given refuge by the mother who not only accepted the rejected and cast out sperm but also had given it loving care and nourished it back to life.

²This was symbolically like extending the spoon with a long handle towards the fire pit and then offering the oblation of the Manth mentioned above in Brahman 3 to the consecrated fire. The spoon resembles the male phallus while the semen is like the Manth.

³By transferring the sperm into the womb of the female, the creator Prajapati was able to establish a link between himself and Nature represented by the female. Further, since the female was able to accept the immensely powerful and energised essence emerging from the supreme creator, she was deemed to be very powerful and potent herself because only someone who is equal in strength and potent can ever hope to accept the burden thrown by one's opponent. Had it not been so, the sperm would have crashed into her and reduced her to smithereens even as a bolt of lightening falling upon a mountain can cause huge pieces of boulders to crumble to dust. This singular event helped to establish the astounding and magnificent glory of a woman.]

3. [This verse draws a parallel between the female genitals and a fire sacrifice pit. Refer Canto 6, Brahman 2, verse no. 13.]

The female genitalia is the altar of the fire sacrifice; her pubic hair represent the seating mat (made of Kush grass in front of the sacred fire; the central part (i.e. the vagina and uterus) is like blazing fire in the centre of the fire pit; and the clitoris is like the fuel or firewood that keeps it alive and burning.

A symbolic sacrifice (i.e. intercourse) done by an aspirant with this wisdom and enlightened view gives the same benefit and rewards as are derived from doing the 'Vajpaye Yagya' (i.e. a special type of fire sacrifice done to propitiate the supreme creator and invoke his blessings to propagate one's own glory). A person who engages himself in sexual activity with this sublime and holy outlook, and who treats the entire exercise as one big fire sacrificial ritual, is able to acquire all the benefits that a woman has to offer (i.e. such a person is able to derive not only sexual satisfaction but not feel guilty about it). [Here, the female is regarded as a medium which helps the man, who is regarded as the Prajapati here, to perform the cosmic fire sacrifice that initiated the process of creation because the entire process basically needs a fire pit where the fire burns (female genitals) and to which offerings are made (sperm, semen). She is regarded as the sacrificial pit into which the male offers the oblation of his sperms. In the actual fire sacrifice, this offering of sperm is represented by the offering of the Manth.]

On the contrary, if this exercise is indulged with grossness of mind, with pervert outlook and depraved obsession for sexual gratification, then it leads to complete destruction and ruin even as any contact with fire is destructive and ruinous for the man; the fire, if not handled with due care, would burn everything that the man possesses, including himself (3).

4. There were three ancient sages who are regarded as experts in this science. They were Uddalak, the son of Aruni, Maudgalya and Kumar Harit. They asserted that there are numerous foolish and ignorant Brahmins who do not know anything about the divine, ethereal and sublime aspect of this symbolic fire sacrifice related to the process of creation. Under the guise of doing a sacrifice, they lose the self restraint and auspicious nature which is expected of them as a Brahmin, and instead indulge in the sexual act to satisfy their carnal desires. As a result, they get fallen from their natural and traditionally exalted stature, and become impersonators who are denigrated, demoted and degenerated.

If by chance a man's semen is ejaculated in small or large quantity, either while he is awake during the day or while he is asleep during the night, before the wife's menses, then he should atone for this sin of wasting the sacred offering meant for the sacred fire sacrifice of creation by letting it go to waste. [It is a similar sin as letting sanctified milk or any other offering meant for the Gods to spill over and fall to the ground. This is equivalent to sacrilege and defiling of the sanctified liquid meant for the Fire God.] To repent for this incontinence, one should adopt (follow) the method described in the next verse (4).

[Note—During formal fire sacrifices, the patron is expected to observe the strictest of vows of abstinence and continence, exercising self restraint in all manners of thoughts and deeds. If this stern vow is not kept, then the whole exercise goes to the wind and no fruit accrues to him. On the contrary, it is punishable offense and the patron suffers a lot of hardship later on in his life. This is why it is very difficult to successfully complete a fire sacrifice without any unwarranted happenings. So, if one treats the sexual exercise as a fire sacrifice, then all the formalities have to be rigidly followed for any benefit to accrue. Otherwise, it would be ruinous for the man and would only pull him down instead of lifting him in his spiritual progress.]

5. The man should touch the ejaculated semen with his hands and sincerely regret for his incontinence. He should express his regrets in the following manner—‘This semen which has fallen on the earth now as well as on any previous occasions when it might have inadvertently fallen upon any water body or plant or herbs (i.e. if it had polluted the earth, water and the plant life), I wish to retrieve it and accept it back once again’. [That is, I am sorry that the symbolic offering that was meant for the fire sacrifice represented by the sexual exercise has been spilled due to my lack of self control and vigil.]

With this Mantra, he should lift the fallen semen with his thumb and third finger, and then smear it on his chest or between his two eyebrows. He should say—‘My vital powers, energy, strength, stamina, vitality and vigour had inadvertently gone out of me; let it come back to me! Let my energy and vitality as well as my good fortune and privilege of being able to bear this glorious symbolic Manth meant for the sacred fire sacrifice come back to me. Let the Fire God and other Gods reinstate them back into me at the proper designated place’ (5).

6. Then he should see his reflection in water with the following Mantras—‘Let the Gods empower and bless me with energy and glory, vitality and vigour, majesty and grandeur, and prosperity and success. Let them inspire me towards righteous and auspicious deeds’.

Then he should liberally praise his wife, saying, 'My wife is like Laxmi amongst women, i.e. she is like the Goddess of wealth and prosperity who is the divine consort of Vishnu, the sustainer, personified'.

The man should approach that auspicious lady, who is chaste, pure and immaculate like a clean and washed piece of cloth, with an equally clean, peaceful and pure heart and mind. He should not go to any other woman under any circumstances (6).

7. If the woman (i.e. the wife) does not surrender willingly, then the man should appease her by giving presents that she is fond of (such as jewelry, clothes or any such thing for which she has a fancy), and subtly express his passions for her. If she still does not volunteer to submit herself to him, then he should show certain degree of sternness and firm resolve to force her into submission. For this purpose he should say to her—'If you do not consent, then I would divert my mind and senses from you and hitch them elsewhere. I can snatch you of the privilege of having been fortunate enough to have attracted my attention, which if diverted elsewhere would have the effect of demoralizing and demoting your self esteem and dignity in the eyes of others'.

This would have the affect that the woman would submit herself to him fearing ignominy and neglect (7).

8. When the woman (wife) has surrendered herself, the man should bless her, saying, 'I am establishing my famous potentials, strength, vitality, vigour, energy, stamina, virtues, glory and dignity in you (through implanting my sperms in your body)'.

This sanctified procedure gives both of them fame and glory (8).

9. When the woman (wife) agrees, the man should embrace her and make love to her. He should invoke the patron God of love and passion and say the following prayer—'Oh Kamdeo-cupid, the Lord of love! Oh God of love and passions! You manifest yourself when the two organs (genitals) meet each other as well as when the two hearts are compatible with each other. [This indicates that the conjugal relationship is a two way voluntary process and not something imposed by the stronger partner upon the weaker or meeker one. No physical force is condoned.]

You represent the essence and juice extracted from my entire body (because the male semen represents the distilled form of the grandest virtues of a man, such as the best of vitality, energy and other life-giving forces present in his body). Make this woman extremely passionate and agitated as a she-deer who has become restless upon being hit by a poisonous arrow and submit herself to me, seeking some way from me to alleviate her sufferings. [In other words, let her surrender to me and fall in my control, leaving herself to my discretion and command, doing what I tell her to do, even as a wounded she-deer would want her wounds healed at any cost.] (9).

[Note--Refer Yogchudamani Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition, verse no. 57-64 in this context.]

10. In case the man wishes that the woman should not conceive during the intercourse, then after the initial steps, just prior to the time of ejaculation at the culmination of intercourse, he should do 'Pranayam', i.e. he should withhold the ejaculation of semen through the process of 'Pranan' and 'Apanan' which entails withholding the Pran wind

(i.e. the breath) and simultaneously pulling up the Apan wind (i.e. the vital wind moving down the intestines)¹.

Then he should make the following solemn resolve—‘Oh woman! I am accepting in me your Reta or vital reproductive energy through my own Reta or semen by using my organs (the male organ which is already inside the female organ, thereby making this virtual sucking process successful)²’. If this is done properly and in a sanctified manner, then the female is not able to conceive (10).

[Note—¹Refer to Sam Veda tradition’s Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 57-58 and Jabal Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 33 in this context.

²A lot of imagination is needed to understand and visualise what is meant here. The semen is withheld by meditative practices known as ‘Pranan and Apanan’. The male organ is already inserted in the female organ much like a hose pipe inside the tank of water. Thus, when the man wishes to withhold the semen he can easily turn off the tap on his end, and to ensure sure hit non-conception he can even suck the vaginal and uterus fluids back into his own organ by a sucking process usually employed in emptying a tank full of water using a pipe, and then spit it out. This is not an abstract idea but actually can be implemented in practice, but the question arises how many people have that level of expertise as described in ancient texts to actually do it? It should be noted that this verse describes a natural method of contraception.]

11. If the man wishes that the woman should conceive then he should go through the initial steps until the actual intercourse ensues. Then he should reverse the process (described in verse no. 10) and do the Apanan exercise first followed by the Pranan¹.

Then he should make the following solemn resolve—‘Oh woman! I am installing the Reta or semen (sperm) present in my organ in your Reta or vaginal and uterine fluids’. By this method, the woman is able to conceive (11).

[Note—The process of meditatively controlling the flow of semen is reversed here when the male wants that the woman should conceive. Earlier the Pranan was done first, not the Apanan is done first.

The entire process can be explained in simple terms as follows. The male organ (the phallus) is compared to the nose—the tip is the outer opening of the nostril through which the vital life-infusing wind called Pran is inhaled, while the same opening is compared to the anus through which the Apan wind, the wind which passes down the intestines and helps to eliminate waste from the body, passes because the exhaled wind also helps to eliminate toxic gases from the body.

Now, if the male wishes to affect contraception then he would ‘suck’ in the vital fluids from the female organ much like a syringe sucks out blood from the body of a patient. This is the Pranan procedure of verse no. 10. The withdrawn fluid of the female is then spitted out through the Apanan procedure much like exhaled wind is thrown out of the body.

When the male wishes that the female conceives as described in verse no. 11, the process is reversed. First he does the Apanan exercise whereby the contents of his male organ, i.e. the semen already filling it, is ejaculated out, or literally ‘exhaled’ like the Apan wind through the opening of his male organ. This semen is transplanted into the female organ and then the male does the Pranan procedure, because the female tube which is now already choked by the inflow of the incoming semen is safe enough to prevent the female fluids from being sucked out by the male organ any longer.

There is another way of looking at it. The Apan wind is the flatus passing down the lower intestines. In order to pass flatus, the muscles of the pelvic region are contracted and sufficient pressure generated. So, at the time of climax, the husband uses all the powers of the muscles of his lower abdomen and pelvic region to force the semen into the female genitalia. Once done with, he relaxes and deeply inhales fresh air through his nostrils which had been tightly shut earlier to help build sufficient pressure needed for ejaculation. Thus, Apan precedes Pran in this procedure.]

12. If one believes that his wife is disloyal to him and he wishes to punish the other person (the adulterer), then he should adopt the following procedure:--

The sacred fire should be consecrated and established in a pot of half-baked earth (mud). Then a reverse order should be followed to offer oblations (of clarified butter etc.) to this fire. Peacock feather with a long pointed stalk resembling sharp arrows having fins should be placed or spread in the unconventional direction—i.e. the south-east corner called the ‘Agni-kon’ instead of the sanctified direction which is north-east called the ‘Ishan-kon’. These feathers should be placed such that their reverse side is facing up and the pointed side of the tip is towards the sacred fire.

Next, these feathers should be dipped in the clarified butter or Ghee and four oblations should be made to the fire. With each offering, one Mantra should be contemptuously and disdainfully said as follows—(a) ‘Mum Samidheahaushiha Pranapano Ta Adade’, meaning ‘Ah! My wife resembles a robust, youthful, splendid and blazing fire, and you (i.e. the adulterer) have offered your oblations (semen/sperm). You have defiled my fire sacrifice. Hence, I sincerely curse you, and woe to you! I hereby confiscate and appropriate your vital winds called Pran and Apan, making you impotent and inept’.

After saying this Mantra, clarified butter should be offered to the fire using the reversed feathers of the peacock (instead of the usual wooden ladle) while saying the word ‘Phat’ meaning ‘explode and tear apart’. When the offering is complete, the following Mantra should be said—‘Asau Mum Shatru’, meaning ‘This is my enemy’ followed by the name of the adulterer.

(b) Similarly, the following Mantra should be said while offering the second oblations to the fire—‘Mum Samidheahaushiha Putrapashuntasta Adade’, meaning ‘Ah! My wife resembles a robust, youthful, splendid and blazing fire, and you (i.e. the adulterer) have offered your oblations (semen/sperm). You have defiled my fire sacrifice. Hence, I sincerely curse you, and woe to you! I vehemently curse you that you’ll lose your sons and livestock’.

Once again, after saying this Mantra, clarified butter should be offered to the fire using the reversed feathers of the peacock (instead of the usual wooden ladle) while saying the word ‘Phat’ meaning ‘explode and tear apart’. When the offering is complete, the following Mantra should be said—‘Asau Mum Shatru’, meaning ‘This is my enemy’ followed by the name of the adulterer.

(c) The third oblation follows the same pattern but the Mantra is the following—‘Mum Samidheahaushi-rishtasukriti Ta Adade’, meaning ‘Ah! My wife resembles a robust, youthful, splendid and blazing fire, and you (i.e. the adulterer) have offered your oblations (semen/sperm). You have defiled my fire sacrifice. Hence, I sincerely curse you, and woe to you! I vehemently curse you that all your righteous deeds and the

good effects of any fire sacrifices that you have done would become null and void, they would not bear fruits for you’.

Once again, after saying this Mantra, clarified butter should be offered to the fire using the reversed feathers of the peacock (instead of the usual wooden ladle) while saying the word ‘Phat’ meaning ‘explode and tear apart’. When the offering is complete, the following Mantra should be said—‘Asau Mum Shatru’, meaning ‘This is my enemy’ followed by the name of the adulterer.

(d) Finally, the fourth oblation is offered to the sacred fire with the following Mantra—‘Mum Samidheahaushaparakasho Ta Adade’, meaning ‘Ah! My wife resembles a robust, youthful, splendid and blazing fire, and you (i.e. the adulterer) have offered your oblations (semen/sperm). You have defiled my fire sacrifice. Hence, I sincerely curse you, and woe to you! I vehemently curse you that all your hopes, expectations, aspirations, wishes, promises, vows, determinations and resolves will be in vain and become fruitless; they would be unfulfilled and you would be ever un-contented’.

Once again, after saying this Mantra, clarified butter should be offered to the fire using the reversed feathers of the peacock (instead of the usual wooden ladle) while saying the word ‘Phat’ meaning ‘explode and tear apart’. When the offering is complete, the following Mantra should be said—‘Asau Mum Shatru’, meaning ‘This is my enemy’ followed by the name of the adulterer.

When a learned and wise Brahmin who himself is pure and righteous, is a stickler for righteousness and auspiciousness, and who understands the astounding import of this religiously sanctified process of procreation (i.e. who realises that this process is a divine fire sacrifice instead of a mere satisfaction of carnal passions) curses another person, then the adulterer loses all his vitality and stamina, all his energy and glory; he is condemned to ignominy and dies an ignominious death.

Hence, one should never cast a licentious eye upon the chaste and loyal wife of a righteous and noble person (12).

13. When a woman is menstruating, she should not eat from a pot made of bronze for the first three days. On the fourth day, she should take a purifying bath and wear a clean cloth that is not torn from any place. This woman should not be touched by any unrighteous man or woman. After three nights have passed, she can engage herself in any work requiring effort and labour (i.e. any physical work such as thrashing of grain etc.) (13).

14. Those couples who wish that they should have a fair complexioned son who studies at least one of the Vedas (i.e. is basically educated if not fully learned in the scriptures) and lives long for a hundred years should eat a sweet pudding made of rice and milk stirred with Ghee (clarified butter). This enables them to be blessed with such sons (14).

15. Those couples who wish that they should have a yellow complexioned son who studies at least two of the Vedas (i.e. is better educated than the primary level if not fully learned in the scriptures) and lives long for a hundred years should eat a sweet pudding made of cooked rice and curd (instead of milk) mixed with Ghee (clarified butter). This enables them to be blessed with sons having the desired virtues (15).

16. Those couples who wish that they should have a dark complexioned son who studies at least three of the Vedas (i.e. is a graduate and better educated than the secondary level if not fully learned in the scriptures) and lives long for a hundred years should eat plain rice cooked in water and mixed with Ghee (clarified butter). This enables them to be blessed with sons having the required virtues (16).

17. Those couples who wish that they should have a daughter who is learned, intelligent, wise and skilled, and who lives a full fruitful life of hundred years, should eat a gruel made of sesame seeds and rice mixed with Ghee (clarified butter). This enables them to be blessed with a daughter with the expected virtues (17).

18. Those couples who wish that their son becomes a famous and acclaimed scholar, gets honour and respect in the assembly of learned people, is intelligent, expert and wise, becomes a fine orator and a pleasant speaker who would be able to endear even his opponents, is learned in all the Vedas, and lives a fruitful life till a mature hundred years, should eat a gruel made of rice and pulp of a herb called Uksha or Rishabh¹, liberally doused with Ghee (clarified butter). This enables them to be blessed with a son having the aforementioned virtues (18).

[Note—¹The *Uksha* or Rishabh is a medicinal herb found in the Himalayan range of mountains in the north of India. It is said to so powerful that it makes a man as potent as a bull; it is said to improve fertility and manliness, virility and masculinity. It is also known as the legendary Som plant in ancient texts. It is especially lauded as a powerful stimulant in *Susrut Sanhita*, section 1, chapter 38 which mentions thirty seven such powerful and potent herbs. Its roots and leaves resemble garlic, and its cousin called the Rishabh plant is shaped like the horns of a bull—hence the name ‘Rishabh’, meaning a bull. It is also called Jivak or the ‘life-giver’. These herbs enhance virility, masculinity, strength, stamina, vitality, vigour and life giving energy in the form of sperms disguised as a blob of mucous. They are sweet to taste and fragrant, and medically neutralize the bad effects of excessive bile and acidity in the body. They are used as antidotes for cough and rheumatism.]

19. On the fourth day in the morning, the man should cook the rice grains freshly threshed by his wife (as described in verse no. 13 above) in an earthen pot. This is to be mixed with consecrated Ghee (clarified butter), and this mixture is used as a Manth to be offered as an offering to the fire sacrifice. [This is a process called ‘Sthalipak’, literally meaning that the platter full of rice mixed with Ghee is ready to be used and deemed to have been pre-cooked symbolically in the plate itself.]

Then the fire sacrifice should be performed using this admixture as Manth, the mixture used as an offering to the consecrated fire. During this sacrifice, the following Mantras should be said—(a) ‘Agneya Swaha’—meaning ‘I offer this oblation to the Fire God’; (b) ‘Anumateya Swaha’—meaning ‘I offer this oblation to the supreme Lord for his permission’; and (c) ‘Devaye Savitre Satyaprasavaye Swaha’—meaning ‘I offer this oblation to the exalted Sun God. Bless me that I have a righteous issue (progeny).’

Performance of the religious fire sacrifice in the above prescribed manner is the best way to do a fire sacrifice with the purpose of procreation as it is a provider of fulfillment of all desires.

The left over Manth (i.e. the portion remaining after the oblations have been made to the sacred fire as described above) should be scooped up from the earthen pot into another container and more Ghee should be added to it. The husband first eats it and then the remaining portion is offered to the wife as a sanctified food.

After eating it, the couple washes their hands and feet, and sip some water to clean the mouth. The water pot is filled with water and the husband pours that water in three installments on his wife in a ritualistic process called 'Abhishek' or anointment. The Mantra pronounced during this process is the following—'Uttisthato Vishwavaasoanyamischa Prapurvaya Sanjayam Patya Saha', meaning 'Oh the sustainer and nourisher of the world! This lady desires to have a virtuous, righteous, noble and worthy son. Bless her cheerfully and willingly so that she can make a happy union with her husband and achieve her desires' (19).

20. After that, the husband should feed his wife the rice meal that has been prepared previously in accordance with the type of offspring the couple wishes to have (as described in verse no. 14-16 above). At the time of going to bed at night, the husband should tightly clasp the wife and say the following Mantra—'Amoahamasmi Sa Twantsa Twamasyamoham Samahamasmi Rik Twam Duyoroham Prithivi Twam Twawehi Sant Rabhavahai Sa Reto Dadhavahai Putsanse Putraye Vittye'—meaning 'Oh goddess! I am like Pran (vital life infusing wind called breath) while you are like Vaak (faculty of speech); you are Vaak while I am Pran; I am like the Sam (the inherent melody present in the sacred chants of the Vedas, especially the Sam Veda) while you are like the Rik (the sacred hymns of the Rig Veda); I am like the Duloka (the sky) while you are like the Prithivi (earth). Hence, come; let us embrace each other to form a couple. Let us together bear the divine energy of creation and its astounding potentials represented by my sperms (semen) so that we can be rewarded with a special son who would be special amongst men' (20).

[Note—It would be noted that the husband cites perfect natural couples such as the faculty of speech called 'Vaak' and the breath known as 'Pran', because without Pran no one would be able to speak; the hymns and their inherent melody because the hymns are chanted in a melodious rhythm; and the sky and the earth because the sky completely surrounds the earth but would lose its value if the earth did not harbour any life.]

21. After that, the man should separate the two legs of the lady. At that time, he should say this Mantra—'Vijihittham Dyavaprithivi Iti', meaning 'Oh the twin thighs representing the twin worlds, the earth and the sky. Separate yourselves'.

Then the man should insert his male phallus in the female genitals, close his mouth on hers, and then softly slide his fingers on her body (i.e. move them as if to caress her) three times from her head to her legs. While this is being done, the Mantra said is the following—'Vishnuryoni Kalpayatum Twashta Rupaani Pitanshatu; Asainchatu Prajapatirthata Garbham Dadhatu Te; Garbham Dhehi Siniwali Garbham Dehi Prithustuke; Garbham Te Ashwini Devavadhttam Pushakar-strajo'. The meaning of this full Mantra is the following—'Oh beloved! Let the all-pervading and omnipresent Lord Vishnu (the sustainer) empower your womb so that you can bear an excellent son. Let Lord Sun provide his glory, majesty, energy, radiance and splendour to you and your upcoming offspring. Let Lord Prajapati (the care taker of the creation and the cosmic

creator; Brahma) establish himself in me and help me in establishing the sperm in you. Let Lord Dhata (another name of the sustainer and preserver of creation; a term used to jointly address the Trinity Gods, Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder) establish the embryo in you. Oh Goddess! You are a personification of Siniwali (the patron Goddess representing the moon one day prior to the dark moon night), the Goddess who is greatly lauded; hence conceive, conceive! [The word 'Sinni' means something that is sweet; hence this address also means 'oh the sweet one'.] Let Lord Ashwini Kumars (the twin sons of the Sun God and the medicine men of the Gods) wear a lotus garland symbolising the rays of the sun and establish themselves in me to empower me to make you conceive with my sperms' (21).

[Note—The husband invokes the blessings of all the great Gods of creation who are charged with the creation, sustenance and preservation as well as conclusion of creation, and visualises that their magnificent and stupendous virtues, glories, potentials, energy and vitality and all other such divine qualities and characteristics are installed in the embryo. That is why he propitiates them all. Since the Ahswini Kumars are medicine men, their blessings are essential to ensure that the conception is done and brought to fruition without any medical problems.]

22. In some ancient time, the Ashwini Kumars had used two self-illuminated 'Arinis'¹ to rub them with each other vigorously to create the first fire of the cosmic womb which harboured the golden embryo. I am symbolically installing that same embryo in you (as I have invoked the Ashwini Kumars to empower me to do so—refer verse no. 21 above). You should nourish it in your womb and produce the reward in the tenth month. Just like the fire is borne by the earth in its bowls, the heavens bear Indra (the God's king), and the various directions bear the air or wind, you too should bear this embryo representing a son that I am installing in your womb (22).

[Note—¹*Arinis* are wooden drills used to kindle the sacred fire of the sacrificial pit by vigorously rubbing them with one another; usually they were made of inflammable material]

23. At the time of birth of the infant, the husband should sprinkle consecrated water on her (wife) and say the following Mantra—'Yathaa Vayuha Pushkarininta Samingyati Sarwataha; Ewa Te Garbha Ejetu Sahavaitu Jarauna. Indrasyayam Vajraha Kritaha Sargalaha Saporisrayaha; Tamindra Nirjahi Garbhena Sawarant Saheti'. The meaning of this long Mantra is as follows—'Just like the wind makes the surface of a calm pond or lake restless and active, creating ripples and small waves that are mobile, your developed foetus should also become mobile in your womb, and inspired by the Wind God it should acquire sufficient momentum to come out of it along with the placenta and its encasing membrane. This path is the designated path by which Indra moves¹. So oh Indra! Enter this path and come out with the embryo and its membranes' (23).

[Note—¹The king of Gods, Indra, has the Wind God as his companion. They move together. It is on the behest of Indra that the Wind God moves the rain bearing clouds across the sky to pour rain upon the earth. The symbolism is very remarkable here—the rain is the harbinger of life on earth; the male semen is like this rain which has seeded life in the womb of the female like the rain seeding earth with life. This completes the cycle

of creation described in Canto 6, Brahman 2, verse no. 9-16; Canto 5, Brahman 10, verse no. 1; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 36; and Canto 4, Brahman 4, verse no. 1-25. In this verse, the Apaana wind force present in the womb activates the muscles of the uterus. These start moving in waves like the ripples on the surface of water of a lake or pond, and push the embryo out.]

24. [Now the formal ceremonies and rituals performed upon the birth of a child are being described.]

Upon the birth of a child, it should be picked up in the lap. A sacred fire is lit. For making offerings to it, a viscous fluid consisting of Ghee (clarified butter) and curd is kept in a bronze vessel. This mixture is used to make three oblations to the sacred fire while the child lies in the lap.

The Mantra said while making the first offering is the following—‘Aamin Sahastram Pushyasamedhamaanha Swe Girhe; Asyopasandya Ma Chaitsit Prajaya Cha Pashubhscha Swaha’. The meaning of this Mantra is as follows—‘I am blessed with a priceless asset and a matchless fortune in the form of a son. Let me be a sustainer and a provider of refuge and shelter for thousands of unfortunate people. [That is, let me become prosperous enough so that I can take care of a large family that would eventually assemble in this household when this son grows up.] In a similar way, let there be no dearth of offsprings, wealth and livestock in the household of this son in future’. With this Mantra, the offering of the mixture should be put in the fire with the word ‘Swaha’, meaning ‘I am offering this oblation to you (the sacred Fire God) for this purpose’.

The Mantra said while making the second offering is the following—‘Mayi Pranatant Stwayi Manasa Juhomi Swaha’. The meaning of this Mantra is as follows—‘I am establishing or symbolically transferring my Pran representing my vitality, vigour, strength, stamina, potency, energy, glory, virtues and characters, my life forces and virtues in you (i.e. in the son)’. Saying this, the mixture is offered to the sacred fire with the word ‘Swaha’, meaning ‘I am offering this oblation to you (the sacred Fire God) for this purpose’.

The Mantra said while making the third offering is the following—‘Yat Karmana Tyariricham Uad Va Nunmihaakaram; Agnishtastwishtakrid Vidwaan Swishtantant Suhutum Karotu Naha Swaheti’. The meaning of this Mantra is as follows—‘Whatever inadvertent transgressions, errors and follies that I might have made, let the Fire God excuse me for them and overlook them. Let him convert them instead into auspicious, noble and righteous deeds and actions (so that instead of being punished for them I and my image, the son, may be absolved of their consequences)’. Saying this, the remaining part of the consecrated mixture is offered to the sacred fire with the word ‘Swaha’, meaning ‘I am offering this oblation to you (the sacred Fire God) for this purpose’ (24).

25. After performing the auspicious initiating ceremony, the father should take his mouth close to the ear of the newly born child and utter the words ‘Vaak’ three times.

[The word Vaak means ‘the faculty of speech’ or ‘to speak’. The process symbolises that the father blesses the child that the three primary Vedas, i.e. the Rig, Sam and Yajur, should be made accessible to him, and consequentially he should be able to acquire the best of knowledge, erudition, wisdom, sagacity and enlightenment epitomized by these scriptures.]

As the next step, pure curd, honey and clarified butter should be stirred into a homogenous paste and scooped up in a golden spoon. This concoction should be picked up on the tip of the finger and the infant should be made to lick it. During the licking procedure, the following four Mantras are to be said—(a) ‘Bhuste Dadhami’, meaning ‘I am symbolically establishing your glory and fame in this terrestrial world’. Or ‘I am anointing you to have majesty over this world’; (b) ‘Bhuvaste Dadhami’, meaning ‘I am symbolically establishing your glory and fame in this celestial world’. Or ‘I am anointing you to have majesty over this world’; (c) ‘Swaste Dadhami’, meaning ‘I am symbolically establishing your glory and fame in this heavenly world’. Or ‘I am anointing you to have majesty over this world’; and (d) ‘Bhu-Bhurvaha-Sarwaha Twayi Dadhami’, meaning ‘I am symbolically establishing your glory and fame in the three worlds consisting of the terrestrial world, the celestial world, and the heavens’. Or ‘I am anointing you to have majesty over all these three worlds’ (25).

[Note—The father is not now an ordinary man but the creator Brahma personified. It must be noted that only a person who is learned in the scriptures and gives them credence would even care to go through this elaborate ritual. And a wise and well-read man in the scriptures is expected to know and understand the import of the entire philosophy behind the procreation process, thereby establishing his own position as the creator Brahma who was the first father who had done the fire sacrifice to initiate the process of creation—refer Canto 1, Brahman 1-6 of this Upanishad. The rest of the people would start celebrating the arrival of the son in a carnival like spirit with no time for such ceremonies. In today’s world, children are born in maternity wards of hospitals and the parents are busy filling forms instead of such rituals which a modern man regards as ridiculous. Perhaps this is the reason why the son turns out to be so wayward and a cause of constant worry and nuisance for both the parents as well as the society when he grows up.]

26. Then the child should be assigned a name. The father should tell him, ‘You are Veda’. This word Veda is the child’s name by default; it is the child’s untold and undeclared name (26).

[Note—Read in the context of verse no. 25, this verse assumes a great significance. The father hopes that his son would grow up to be a learned man well versed in the Vedas and would be honoured by this title because it would indicate that he is a personification of wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment as well as an embodiment of all possible knowledge that exist in this world and is enshrined in the Vedas. His fame and good name would naturally spread and get established in all the directions of the world as a well-read wise man. This is how his Lordship would be firmly rooted in the three worlds represented by the words Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha as mentioned in verse no. 25 above. See also verse no. 27 below.]

27. Then the father should return the child to the wife (i.e. the child’s mother) and ask her to breast feed it. At that time, the following Mantra is to be said—‘Yaste Stanaha Shashayo Yo Mayomuryo Ratnadha Vasuvid Yaha Sudatraha. Yen Vishawa Pushayasi Varanayani Saraswati Tamahi Dhatwe Karaiti’. The meaning of this Mantra is as follows—‘Oh Goddess Saraswati (the patron Goddess of learning, wisdom and speech)! Let your breasts become a treasury (receptacle) of an endless flow of milk which is a wholesome provider of nourishment to all the creatures in this creation. It is like a mine

of all gems; it is magnanimous bestower of all worldly as well as heavenly assets; and it is through it (milk of knowledge) that you bless everyone with all possible noble, auspicious and righteous virtues and qualities that are worth acquiring and possessing. Oh Goddess! Subtly enter the body of my wife and put your breast into this child's mouth to enable it to suck the nectar of life that would sustain and protect it' (27).

[Note—The Goddess Saraswati who is the patron Goddess of knowledge and erudition is invoked by the father once the child is born and ready to imbibe food and drink. This symbolises the eagerness of the father that his son should become wise and learned. One very pertinent point to note here is that a wise father is not invoking the Goddess of wealth known as Laxmi to feed the child and nourish it. This is because a wise father realises that if the child has knowledge, wisdom, erudition, intelligence, skills, expertise and sagacity, virtues whose patron Goddess is Saraswati and not Laxmi, then money and material well being would automatically follow suit. Worldly assets are all perishable but truthful knowledge learned by studying the Vedas would make his son immortal in the sense that his name and fame would not only spread far and wide but also become immortal.]

28. The child's mother is finally blessed by the following Mantra—'Ilasi Maitravaruni Vire Virmjijanat; Sa Twam Virvati Bhav Yasman Virvatoakaraditi; Tam Va Atamahuratipita Batabhuratipitamaho Bataabhuha Pramam Bat Kashtaam Prapachhriya Yashasa Brahmvarchase Ya Avamvido Brahmnasaya Putra Jayat Iti'. The meaning of this long Mantra is as follows—'Oh Goddess! You are a personification of the honourable and praise worthy Maitra-varuni (another name of Arundhati, the wife of sage of Vashistha, the moral preceptor of Lord Ram and the son of the creator Brahma). Oh the brave one! By giving birth to a brave son, you have given me the honour of becoming the father of a brave son. Hence, I bless you that you too be known as the mother of a brave son. [That is, let us be equally proud of being the parents of a brave son.]

Let the people say that this child is better and superior to his father and grandfather. Let him attain the pinnacle of glory, success, achievements, progress and development in his life in this world. Let him acquire and be possessed of the best of 'Laxmi' (a metaphor for worldly riches and material well being), the best of 'Yash' (fame, good name, majesty, authority and renown), and the best of 'Brahm Tej' (divine glory, spiritual magnificence, splendorous energy and excellent vitality and other virtues, values and qualities associated with a person who is Brahm-realised; let him shine in every field that is auspicious and righteous much like the radiance and splendour of Brahm who is the supreme transcendental Being)'.

A Brahmin (i.e. a learned and wise man) in whose household such a son is born also becomes worthy of admiration, honour and praise (28).

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Chapter 5

The Revelation of Creation according to The Upanishads of the Krishna Yajur Veda

5. (a) The Varaaha Upanishad:--

(Canto 1; Canto 2, verse no. 54; Canto 5, verse no. 71-72)

Canto 1

[This Canto lists the ninety six Tattvas, the fundamental elements or principles of creation.]

1. OM Salutations! The great sage named Ribhu did severe Tapa (penance and austerity) for twelve long years measured according to the days of the Gods¹. At the end this period, pleased by his Tapa, Lord Varaaha² appeared before him and asked him to ask for some boon—‘Oh Ribhu! Wake up and ask for some boon’.

The sage got up from his meditative trance and respectfully bowed to the Lord, and submitted, ‘Oh Lord! I do not harbour any worldly or material desires or have any sort of wishes that are needed to be fulfilled in this world. I have no worldly passions and yearn for nothing like those persons who are passionate about the world, are overwhelmed by its material charms, and long for its pleasures and comforts. [That is, I do not wish to ask for any worldly boons to be granted to me. I am fully contented, and have no worldly yearnings or material needs.]

All the Vedas, the Shastras (scriptures), the Itihas (ancient traditional histories), the Purans (ancient mythological histories), and all other voluminous texts that give knowledge of everything in existence, along with Brahma the creator and other Gods—all of them assert that true Mukti (liberation and deliverance for the creature and emancipation and salvation of his soul) is obtained by only one method, and that is to have knowledge of and devotion for your true divine form. Hence, please elaborately elucidate for me that eclectic knowledge which would enable me to get acquainted with this truthful divine and sublime form of yours for my spiritual benefit. This knowledge is known as ‘Brahm Vidya³’ because it would enlighten me about the knowledge that would provide me with true liberation and ensure my deliverance’.

Then Lord Varaaha blessed him, assuring him that it would be exactly as he wishes. ‘Alright, so be it. Let me begin to preach you.

This Brahm Vidya—the knowledge of the supreme, transcendental, quintessential and irrefutable Truth of creation that enlightens one about the divine cosmic entity that is

behind the existence of the entire creation, that is the root and the cause of everything that exists, and that is pure cosmic Consciousness known by the name of Brahm—is said by some to consist of twenty four Tattvas (essential elements, units or principles of creation), while some others are of the view that it has thirty six Tattvas, while there are still others who assert that it has ninety six elements (1).

[Note—¹1 year of Gods = 36 human years. Therefore, 12 years of Gods for which Ribhu did Tapa would be $12 \times 36 = 432$ human years.

²Lord *Varaaha*—This is the third incarnation of Lord Vishnu as a boar in which he had killed the demon Hiranyaaksha and lifted the earth out of the flood waters in which it had been submerged. This is symbolic of the Lord's retrieving the world from the deep ocean of sins in which it was plunged over time. The *Varaaha Puran* is dedicated to him.

³The concept of 'Brahm Vidya' is dealt with in a number of Upanishads, such as Kaivalya Upanishad, Brahm Upanishad, Panch Brahm Upanishad, Akchyu-panishad, Tejobindu Upanishad, and Brahm Vidya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda. Basically it means the most eclectic, the most esoteric and the profoundest of knowledge pertaining to supreme transcendental Divinity known as Brahm.]

2. I shall now narrate for you in a sequential form the various Tattvas (essential principles) of that eclectic Brahm Vidya (knowledge pertaining to Brahm). Listen carefully¹.

The Gyan Indris, i.e. the organs of perception, are five—viz. the one with which sound is heard, i.e. the ears; the one with which anything is felt, i.e. the skin; the one with which anything is seen, i.e. the eye etc. [The others being the one with which anything is smelt, i.e. the nose; and the one with which anything is tasted, i.e. the tongue.] (2).

[Note—¹Since the entire creation is a visible manifestation of Brahm, it follows that by understanding the basic Tattvas that constitute the fundamental units of the body of knowledge concerning Brahm, one would be able to get an idea of what really the creation is made up of, and what actually determines the overall character, nature and temperament of this creation as whole as well as of its individual units.]

3. Similarly, the organs of action are five in number—viz. the one related to speech (i.e. the mouth); the hand (which accepts and does deeds), the legs (which is concerned with movement) etc. [The other two are—anus concerned with excretion, and genitals that are concerned with procreation.]

The vital winds, called Vayu, are also five in number—such as Pran (breath), Apaana (wind that moves down in the intestines) etc. [The other three being Udaana responsible for lifting the body, Vyana responsible for maintaining equilibrium and pressure within the body, and Samana responsible for equal distribution of nutrients and blood circulation.]

The Tanmatras (the subtle senses of perception) are also five in number—viz. hearing of words (as done by the ears); feeling anything touched (as done by the skin); seeing anything and perceiving its colours, shape, size and contours (as done by the eye); tasting anything (as done by the tongue); and smelling anything or perceiving anything by the virtue of its smell in all its variations—fragrances, scents, perfumes or even stinks etc. (as done by the nose) (3).

[Note—Refer Panch Brahm Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

4. The next set of four Tattvas are the following—Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Ahankar (sense of ego, pride, arrogance, haughtiness and vanity), and Chitta (sub-conscious mind; memory and conscience).

So the entities mentioned above are called the twenty four Tattvas by those who are well versed in the knowledge of Brahm (4).

[Note—The Tattvas counted are from verse nos. 2-4 as follows— $5 + 5 + 5 + 5 + 4 = 24$.]

5. There are five Maha Bhuts (the great primary elements of creation) also like these twenty four Tattvas. These five are the following—earth, water, fire or energy, wind or air, and sky or space (5).

6. The body of a creature has been divided into three principle types—viz. gross, subtle and causal. This fact is known by wise and expert persons.

Similarly, there are three principle states of existence—viz. Jagrat or waking state, Swapna or dreaming state, and Sushupta or deep sleep state (6).

[Note—Briefly, the three aspects of the body are the following—The gross body is the external part of the physical body consisting of the five organs of perception such as eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin, and the five organs of action such as hands, legs, mouth, genitals and excretory. The subtle component of this body is the mind-intellect complex which plays an intermediary role between the creature and the external world. And finally there is the causal body which harbours the pure conscious Atma that is the ‘cause’ of the existence of the creature’s life inside this body and the ‘cause’ of the existence of the world at large.

The three states of existence of this conscious Atma are the following—Jagrat state is the state of wakefulness when the creature remains physically active in this material world of sense objects, perceiving its inputs with the sense organs of perception as listed above, and reacting with the sense organs of action. The Swapna state is when the external gross body is asleep but the subtle body consisting of the sub-conscious mind is very much active; this is the period when one dreams. Finally, there is the state when even the sub-conscious mind goes to sleep, i.e. when there is no dream. This state of consciousness goes beyond the dreaming state and is called Sushupta literally meaning asleep in the true sense when the consciousness has no feelings or senses left in it.]

7. Oh wise sage! The above mentioned Tattvas come to a total of thirty five¹.

Their composite form (which has revealed itself as this creation) is the thirty sixth Tattva² (7).

[Note--¹The 35 Tattvas are arrived as follows—24 Tattvas (till verse no. 4) + 5 (verse no. 5) + 3 types of bodies + 3 states of conscious existence (verse no. 6) = 35.

²The product created by the interaction and numerous combinations of these thirty five Tattvas in various ratios and permutations is distinct from any one Tattva, more than one Tattvas or all the Tattvas taken together. There is no resemblance between the units that are used to build the structure and the final shape that it takes, though the structure would fundamentally be known on the basis of its constituent parts. This finished

product, which is at variance from its constituent units, is in the nature of an independent Tattvas, hence it is the 36th Tattva.]

8. All those things that take a birth (and therefore die or perish, and hence are mortal and non-eternal and transitory) have six inherent faults or shortcomings of perception in them.

These faults are the following—(i) That there is an ‘Asti’—i.e. to be in existence. [This is a major fault because whatever that exists in this world is an illusion created by the mind just like the existence of water seen in a desert mirage, ghost in the dark, a serpent in the rope, change in the moon’s surface during the lunar cycle, two or more suns when seen as an image in more than one mirror, the sun or moon being devoured by some imaginary demon during eclipses, the rising or setting of the moon or the sun, etc. There is another interpretation of the term ‘existence’—it is the existence of ‘duality’, the conception that there are two independent entities such as the Jiva or the living creature and the Parmatma or the Supreme Being, or the conception of ‘you’ and ‘me’, or ‘this’ and ‘that’. This is against the fundamental tenet of Vedanta which lays stress on ‘non-duality’ of everything which briefly states that whatever that exists is but one single non-dual Brahm revealed in that form. Therefore, the concept of ‘Asti’ has an erroneous, a fallacious and ill-conceived foundation. Anything founded on errors of perception or misjudgment is bound to be faulty, distorted, and away from the reality and truth.]

(ii) That there is a ‘Jaati’—i.e. birth. This relates to the conception that there is a birth and that things are freshly born or reborn again. [This is a fault also because of two reasons. One, if anything does not exist as asserted by the first clause, then the question of its being born or dying does not arise. And two, even if we were to treat everything as Brahm personified—because it would be difficult to deny things physically seen and witnessed—then it is forgotten that Brahm does not take a birth, for it is eternal, infinite, imperishable and the ‘one without a birth’. Therefore this very conception of having a birth has no sound footing; it is faulty. It is an upshot of faulty perception of the reality of Brahm and Truth.]

(iii) That there is a ‘Vardhan’—i.e. there is increase, enhancement, expansion, growth. This relates to the conception that an entity increases, enhances, grows or develops. [This is a fault because for one, ‘truth’ never grows and develops, it is always constant, universal, uniform and never changing; and two, ‘Brahm’ also does not grow or enhance or develop or in any way change because it is the ultimate Truth in creation, and ‘Truth’ does not change.]

(iv) That there is a ‘Parinaam’—i.e. result or consequence or effect or sequel. This relates to the conception that there is a sequel, a consequence, an affect, an upshot, an outcome, a result, a follow up or a fruit of certain deed that was done in the past. [This arises out of the fundamental error that one is the doer of anything, that therefore there is a consequence, a result or sequel of that deed—either good or bad—which cannot be avoided and must be either enjoyed or suffered. This is a fundamental error of conception because one is not a doer of anything because all deeds are done by the physical body which is not the ‘self’ of the person, for this ‘self’ is the pure consciousness called the Atma that lives as a distinct entity inside the body as its resident. Further, since there is no truth in what is seen in this world, the question of there being a birth, development and an end does not arise, and consequentially the question of anything being a Parinaam of any deed done in the past life also does not arise.]

(v) That there is a 'Kshaya/Kchaya'—i.e. decay and decline. This relates to the conception that there is a stage called the last stage when there is decay and decline. [This is an error arising out of the pervious errors because anything that is eternal, infinite, imperishable and truthful, for instance Brahm, never decays or declines, nor does anything that really does not exist, like this illusionary world, can ever decay or decline. It is all imaginary, delusory and false.]

(vi) That there is a 'Naash'—i.e. destruction and ruin. This relates to the conception that there is finally destruction or termination. [This fault is a derivative of the earlier faults.] (8).

[Note—This brings the tally of Tattvas to 42 as follows—36 Tattvas (counted till verse no. 7) + 6 Tattvas (verse no. 8) = 42.]

9. The six Urmis or faults of the body are the following—(i) 'Ashana' or hunger, the need to eat, and therefore the need for food (along with all the accompanying problems such as worrying about its production, safety, storage, procurement, cooking, proper digestion etc.); (ii) Pipaasa or thirst, and the desire to drink and therefore the need for liquids to quench the thirst (which create the same sort of problems that are associated with the need for food; (iii) Shoka or grief, distress and dismay (which have a profound negative impact on the overall mental, psychological and general metabolic health of the body); (iv) Moha or to have strong attractions or longing for anything or anyone, to be emotionally attached with anything, to be deluded, to be held under magical spell of anything or to be under its charm, to hallucinate as a result of these emotional faults (all of which makes a man a virtual serf of his emotions and tied down to the object of his adoration, thereby robbing him of his independence and peace, and more often than not becoming the cause of his interminable sufferings); (v) Jara or old age and its attendant decline of the body leading to its decrepit and weakened physical state when the body loses its strength, vigour and stamina, thereby becoming a burden on the person; and finally (vi) Mritu or death of the body. All these factors create an immense amount of discomfort and horrors to the person (i.e. to the Atma that is the true identity of the person) to whom this body belongs. [In other words, as long as the person continues to have the erroneous conception that this body is

Then there are six Koshas or coverings or structural features of the body. Now I shall tell you about them. (9).

[Note—This brings the tally of Tattvas to 54 as follows—42 Tattvas (as counted till verse no. 8) + 6 Urmis + 6 Koshas (of verse no. 9) = 54.]

10. The Koshas (mentioned in verse no. 9 above) are the following—skin, blood, flesh, stomach or abdomen, marrow and bones. [As would be evident, these are the components of the gross body of the creature.]

The other six Tattvas relate to the natural habits and temperaments of the creature—such as Kaam (lust, passions, desires and yearnings), Krodh (anger, indignation, wrathfulness, ill-temper), Lobh (greed, rapacity), Moha (attraction, infatuations, attachments, delusions and ignorance), Mada (arrogance, haughtiness, false pride, hypocrisy and ego) and Matsarya (envy, jealousy, malice and ill-will). These are the faults associated with his natural temperament and the state of his mind. (10).

[Note—This brings the tally of Tattvas to 60 as follows—54 Tattvas (as counted till verse no. 9) + 6 Tattvas (of verse no. 10) = 60.]

11. These six faults in a person's character (mentioned in verse no. 10) are called his natural Dushmans or enemies.

There are three types of world that the Jiva lives in. They pertain to the three states in which the consciousness exists in this world. They are (i) Vishwa (the gross world as the individual creature perceives it in its waking state of consciousness), (ii) Taijas (the gross world as the individual creature perceives it in its dreaming state of consciousness), and (iii) Pragya (the gross world as the individual creature perceives it in its deep sleep state of consciousness).

Then there are three types of Gunas or characteristics qualities that are inherent in all living beings which decide his basic nature, temperament and personality traits. These are (i) Sata Guna (the best trait or virtue which is marked by auspicious values), (ii) Raja Guna (which is the medium quality marked by the worldly desires for enjoyment, development and growth), and (iii) Tama (which is the lowest and meanest quality marked by the propensity for being pervert, committing errors, making sins and doing mischief and misdeeds) (11).

[Note—This brings the tally of Tattvas to 66 as follows—60 Tattvas (as counted till verse no. 10) + 3 states of existence of the Jiva + 3 Gunas (of verse no. 11) = 66.]

12. There are said to be three types of Karma or deeds—(i) Praarabdha—deed that is obligatory because of the cumulative effects of one's past life and the latent desires, passions and temperaments that are brought forward from it, inspiring and compelling a person to behave in a certain way and do certain deeds and take actions which his own sibling would abhor; this compulsion is obtained as an inheritance from the past, and over which one has no or least control; (ii) Aagamya—deed that would be needed to be done in the future and about which no idea can be had at the present time, but it may or may not be as result of the present or the past; and (iii) Arjit—that which is done in the present at a given point of time, and which results in the creation and accumulation of effects that would have bearing on the future.

There are five more Tattvas as follows—(i) Vachan—to promise and make vows; (ii) Aadaan—to receive and accept, to come; (iii) Gaman—to go and give; (iv) Visarjan—to distribute and disperse, to dispense and expel, to eliminate and discharge; and (v) Anand—bliss, ecstasy, happiness and joy.

[These five Tattvas are variations of the term Karma or deed because they all involve action that the body takes. It is the body of the creature that physically speaks, receives or gives, comes or goes anywhere, eliminates waste from inside it, or enjoys the pleasures and comforts of the sense objects of the material world. The main Principal called the Atma, the pure consciousness that is the truthful identity of the person, is neutral and a resident of this body, and therefore distinct from it. This Atma does not actually and physically do anything, but for all practical purposes it is deemed to be morally responsible and accountable for all the deeds done by the body because it is the 'Lord' of the whole setup. Besides this, it happens only till the time the person thinks that the body is his true identity, and therefore he is deemed to be responsible and accountable for what

the body does. Should he disassociate himself from the body and treat his 'self' as the Atma, he is freed from unwarranted accusations of being a doer of deeds.] (12).

[Note—This brings the tally of Tattvas to 74 as follows—66 Tattvas (as counted till verse no. 11) + 3 deeds + 5 Tattvas (of verse no. 12) = 74.]

13. The next set of four Tattvas are the following—(i) Sankalps—to make aspirations, violations, determinations, promises and resolutions; (ii) Adhyavashya—inconstant work and enterprise, to continue to do one's tasks and duties assiduously, to remain busy in doing one's work and deeds, and not shunning responsibilities, not being lazy and indolent; (iii) Avimaan—to have pride in one's deeds, abilities and qualities; and (iv) Avadhaarana—to have certainty of views, to determine and deduce firmly without having any doubt.

The next set of four Tattvas are the following—(i) Mudit—to be very glad, cheerful, joyous and happy; (ii) Karuna—to be kind, graceful, merciful and compassionate, to have empathy and sympathy; (iii) Maitri—to have friendly disposition; and (iv) Upeksha—to neglect and be indifferent. [These set of four Tattvas are closely related to the Tattvas listed in verse nos. 12-13.] (13).

[Note—This brings the tally of Tattvas to 82 as follows—74 Tattvas (as counted till verse no. 12) + 4 + 4 Tattvas (of verse no. 13) = 82.]

14. The following are the divine Gods who constitute the next group of fourteen Tattvas—The patron Gods of various directions, Vayu (the Wind God), Surya (the Sun God), Pracheta (Prajapati—one of the ancient forefathers of creation), Ashwinikumars (the physicians of the Gods and the twins sons of the Sun God), Agni (the Fire God), Indra (the king of Gods), Upendra (Vishnu), Mrityu (the Death God personified as Yam), Chandra (the Moon God), Brahma (the creator), Rudra (Shiva), Kshetrageya (the different Gods of various realms of creation), and Ishwar (the Supreme Being; the Lord God) (14).

[Note—This brings the tally of Tattvas to 96 as follows—82 Tattvas (as counted till verse no. 13) + 14 Gods (of verse no. 14) = 96.]

15. These are the ninety six Tattvas or elementary units that together—in different permutations and combinations—result in the creation of this vast and multifarious world of immense diversities, and the moulding of its characteristic attributes, deciding its virtues and qualities, and determining the nature and temperament of its individual component.

All these Tattvas are unique in themselves; they are most esoteric, queer, uncommon, remarkable and exceptional. They are so wonderful, stupendous and fantastic that they are difficult to be easily imagined, let alone be comprehended and be analyzed.

They have no faults of their own in them inasmuch as they are 'primary elements' which are pure and free from any kind of tainting effects that are extraneous to their natural state, and are free from any kind of external influences to their primary form. But these individual elements appear to become tainted or effected—i.e. they begin to exhibit characteristics quite divergent from their natural state of existence and quite contrary to what one has learnt about them from the study of the scriptures—only when they

combine with other elements to form an entity that does not at all resemble any of these individual elements or Tattvas from which it is built. In other words, the end result of the mixing together of the Tattvas creates an entity that has not the slightest of semblance with the character of its ingredients, but its characters are falsely imposed upon the Tattvas in the belief that the finished product would exhibit the characters of its ingredients. Though this maxim is correct in the general term, but it does not apply when anything is scrutinized closely and analytically.

Therefore, if one tries to deduce the nature and inherent virtues of any given Tattva based on the characteristics of the finished product—the result of the combination of two or more Tattvas—he is bound to make wrong deductions¹ (15).

[Note--¹This is because the product of this combination would vary from the principal ingredients, giving a wrong impression about the fundamental form and nature of these primary elements. The simple example of water would suffice—water molecules consist of atoms of two primary elements, viz. Hydrogen and Oxygen which are primarily in gas forms, but the water as we know it is has no resemblance to either of them because it is liquid. So when one is told that water consists of these two primary elements, one gets a wrong impression about the primary nature and properties of both Hydrogen and Oxygen which are gases in their natural form and not liquid like water. Besides this, water exists in various physical forms—liquid, solid, vapour, moisture, steam etc., some of which are visible and some not. For instance, one can see water as liquid, solid in the form of ice, and vapour in the form of steam, but can anyone see Hydrogen and Oxygen in their natural form as gases?]

16. Those who worship and have sincere devotion for me and my divine sublime form as Varaaha (i.e. my subtle and sublime primary form as Vishnu, the sustainer and protector, who had assumed this unusual and queer form of a boar for the larger welfare of creation), those who meditate upon and remember this form with devotion and respect—they are freed of all ignorance and delusions. They become Jivan Mukta—i.e. they obtain liberation and deliverance for their souls even while alive in this world (16).

17. Those who are wise, erudite and enlightened enough to know the mystery behind creation with these primary ninety six Tattvas as revelations of one single non-dual Brahm are deemed to be liberated and delivered from the fetters of ignorance and its accompanying delusions (about this world and everything in it) no matter to which Ashram they belong—i.e. it does not matter which school of philosophy they subscribe to or the way of life they prefer to lead. Therefore, it does not matter if they live like a Jati (an ascetic or hermit who keeps long matted hair on the head, and leads a life of austerity and penance), or as a Mundi (one who shaves of the hair and keeps a bald head like a monk or a renunciate Sanyasi), or as a Brahmachari who keeps a Shikha (a householder or student in his pre-household days when he studying the scriptures under the aegis of a wise teacher, or anyone else who sports the tuft of hair on the top of the head; this tuft is worn as a religious sign by all initiated Hindus).

There is no doubt about it. [In other words, erudition, wisdom and enlightenment are a state of the mind, the state of the person's internal being, rather than his external appearances or the physical state of his gross body. The evolved spiritual state of an individual cannot be judged based on his outer appearances, for more often than not the latter is misleading and hides some different truth. A pervert monster can be disguised as

a monk, and vice versa. For a truly self and Brahm realised person, the physical appearance and state of the gross body is of no consequence. It is the state of his mind that sets him apart from the herd.] (17).

Canto 2, verse nos. 54-55

54. The Isha (literally the ‘Lord’ of creation who is the aim of all spiritual practices, here referring to the Supreme Being) had created this creation because he visualised it and then gave this visualization effect by actually entering this imaginary world created by this vision, thereby lending it credence and truthfulness. [The world was first simply a conception, not even on the drawing board of the supreme Lord. Then he drew the plan and moulded the structure of the creation. But this lacked any signs of life and appeared to be an exercise in futility. So the Lord decided to enter it and give it an instant injection of consciousness and life. And behold what he created— the colourful canvas of this vast and multifaceted creation that is so magnificent, stupendous, magical and unique that no two units of it are exactly alike. This creation is so fascinating that even after endless frame of time that has elapsed since its inception, it is still in an evolving stage, it is still unfolding!]

Similarly, the Jiva (the living being; the creature) first uses the powers of imagination of the mind to create a world, and then begins to see it in the waking state of consciousness. This creates an attraction for the magnificent array of numerous charms proffered by the world and an accompanying desire to step into the world to actually enjoy it and get a feel of it first hand. Then the creature finds that he has landed in a quagmire from which he is unable to pull himself out. The result is that now he desires a way out of it—i.e. he yearns for ways that would give him liberation and deliverance from the fetters that has tied him down in this world and trapped him perpetually. But he forgets what actually is the cause of his entrapment—i.e. he remains oblivious of the fact that it is his own mind and the numerous Sankalps (refer verse nos. 45, 48) that it makes that is responsible and at the root of creation of this world and the desire to enjoy it or remain involved or engrossed in it (54).

55. The entire creation, right from the humble reed up to the colossal and complex world made up of various combinations of elements, is an illusion that has been created by the Supreme Being (by using the maverick powers of the Maya).

The entire expanse of the creation—both in its grosser manifestation as the visible world seen during the waking state of consciousness by the Jiva (creature) to the subtler form consisting of the principle elements as enumerated by the Sankhya Shastra (one of the six schools of Indian philosophy)¹, and ending in the state when the consciousness finds its final rest (i.e. the conclusion of creation)—all are my (Lord Varaaha’s or Lord Vishnu’s) revelations. [That is, everything in creation is some or the other form of the supreme Brahm who had first revealed himself as the Viraat Purush at the macro level of creation, and the rest of the creation was revealed from this Viraat Purush. In fact, this creation is a visible metamorphosis of the all-pervading and all-inclusive invisible Viraat Purush. Since Vishnu is another name given to this Viraat Purush by the Purans, and since Vishnu has incarnated as Lord Varaaha who is preaching this Upanishad, it follows

that the term ‘me or my form’ refers to the Supreme Being himself. Nothing exists that is beyond the purview of the Supreme Being.] (55).

[Note—¹*Sankhya Shastra*-- This is one of the six great schools of Indian philosophy. It was first propounded by sage Kapil as ‘Shankhya Sutras’. [Refer Bhagwata 3/25-33, and Canto 5-6 of Shwetashwatar Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

The word ‘Shastra’ means any body of knowledge which has been deeply researched and then systematically codified and made useful in a meaningful way.

The word ‘Sankhya’, according to some scholars, refers to the ‘number’ or ‘numeral’ that it refers to, because it says that there are twenty five elements or ‘Tattwas’ in creation. However, there are some others who assert that it refers to ‘Gyan’ or acquisition of truthful knowledge of the reality behind the façade of illusions. It stresses on Gyan or truthful knowledge as the only path leading to liberation and deliverance of the soul from this world, and its attaining final emancipation and salvation riding on the boat of knowledge.

Therefore, the combined word “Sankhya Shastra” refers to the philosophy that endeavours to unravel the great secrets of creation based on sound knowledge and rational logic. It has six chapters and contains five hundred twenty six Sutras or keys or codes that unlock the profound treasure of knowledge pertaining to who the creature actually is, how has he come to be what he is at present, and how he can be freed from this vicious cycle of birth and death. Only when one understands the beginning can he understand the end, because this so-called ‘beginning’ has its origin in the previous ‘end’. That is, only after something ends and carries forward certain baggage with it does a new beginning can start. After all, this is based on the fundamental tenet of Nature that ‘nothing can start from nothing; there must be something from which anything starts’. That is why we say that there cannot be smoke without a fire.

Now, if one goes back to the ‘very beginning of creation’ when there wasn’t any prior life from which any new life could be born on the principles of ‘deeds and their consequences’, i.e. the theory that when a creature does any deed in this life then he would have to take a new birth to suffer the consequences of these deeds because they cannot be wished away, the question arises ‘what started this creation then?’ The Sankhya Shastra endeavours to answer precisely this question in a very logical and systematic manner.

This secret was revealed, according to the of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition’s Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 5/2, to sage and seer Kapil who was the first person to whom the esoteric secrets of creation were unraveled by the Supreme Being (Brahm) himself. In fact, the whole of Cantos 5 and 6 of this Upanishad are dedicated to this philosophy of Sankhya Shastra.

It was propagated by Kapil’s disciple Aasuri and then by the latter’s disciple Pankashika.

This philosophy accepts only three basic yardsticks or valid sources of knowledge—viz. ‘Pratakshya’ or direct perception or cognition of anything such as directly seeing a thing for one’s self, ‘Anumaan’ or implied knowledge or deduction of anything entails inference of something based on some other first hand knowledge, and ‘Shabda’ or the word affirming this knowledge which is like a testimony of some witness or any dependable source.

So this philosophy adopts the approach of reaching the unknown from what is known. It has reduced all that can be experienced in this world to two fundamental units of creation—the Purush (the Supreme Being; Brahm; cosmic Self) and Prakriti (Nature; the invisible matrix of all forms of natures and temperaments that characterize this creation). The basic argument of this philosophy is that ‘nothing can be produced from

nothing'. In other words, if the creation has come into being, then there must be something that pre-dates this present creation. If this creation is the effect of some past deed, then obviously there must have been some occasion when certain deed was done which resulted in the present. It states that 'Karya (the result) pre-existed (had a truthful existence) in the Kaaran (the cause of the result)'. Suppose we have an earthen lamp. This lamp, made of clay or mud, was inherently present in the un-moulded lump of clay or mud before it was shaped. Had it not been so, the clay or mud could not have been moulded into the shape of the lamp.

When this argument is applied to the experience of the world, one observes that there are three basic qualities exhibited by all things—one that gives pleasure and happiness, the other which is just the opposite, and the third which does not affect us at all, i.e. we remain neutral to it. Sankhya philosophy states that there are three 'Gunas' or basic virtues and qualities in creation which determine these three responses as well as the characters of things which evince these responses. These three Gunas are Sata which produce positive responses of happiness and bliss, Raja which create negative response of pain and sufferings, and Tama which generates neither.

In more physical terms, Sata Guna means pure and holy, and it is conducive to knowledge marked by these characteristics. The Raja Guna produces desires and ambitions which create restlessness in their wake. Tama Guna is meanest of them all, for it creates a tendency for resistance and inactivity. A man having the Tama Guna in excess would not do anything himself and neither would he allow others to do their duties.

It should be noted here that there is a situation when all these three Gunas can theatrically exist in perfect balance—this situation is the ideal situation and is synonymous with Prakriti at the cosmic level. This Prakriti, therefore, becomes perfectly 'neutral' and self centered; it is the perfect example of grossness because it remains in a state of perpetual coma or paralysis because of this balance. It is when this perfect balance is disturbed that it starts stretching and yawning like a man waking up from a deep slumber.

An example would illustrate. An electrolyte works when there is a difference of potential between the two electrodes—i.e. the cathode and the anode. A neutral solution having the same electrodes dipped in it would not perform the function of electrolysis.

On the other hand, the Purush is the cosmic Consciousness or the Atma or cosmic Soul.

The 'evolution of the creation' starts when a union is established between this Purush and Prakriti. There arises a question here. Purush is neutral and absolutely unattached to anything, while Prakriti is gross and lifeless. How is their cooperation possible? Well this is illustrated by the example of physically handicapped intelligent man who has lost the leg and cannot walk and a blind man who cannot see but can walk. The blind can carry the lame on his back, and under the latter's guidance, can reach the destination.

The process of evolution of creation from this primary Nature or Prakriti is as follows—As the result of the three Gunas mixing with themselves, the first offspring was 'Mahat' or Buddhi (the cosmic intellect).

From the Raja Guna part of this Buddhi emerged Ahankar (cosmic pride and vanity, ego and the notion of individualism and selfish arrogance).

From the Sata Guna part of this Buddhi emerged Mana (the cosmic mind), the five organs of perceptions (eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin), the five organs of actions (hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genital).

From the Tama Guna part of Buddhi emerged the five Tanmatras (the five perceptions of sight, hearing, smell, taste and feeling) and from these further developed the five Bhuts or elements (such as the sky, air, fire, water and earth).

Thus, there would be twenty three such elements + Prakriti + Purush = twenty five components of creation in all.

There is another way at looking at this philosophy. It describes the origin of the cosmos from Brahm who created the macrocosmic first Male called Purush and his female counterpart, the Prakriti (Mother Nature), who are the basic cause of this vast and myriad creation. The individual male and female human beings are the microcosmic forms of that macrocosmic Purush and Prakriti. It is their union which resulted in this cosmos. Their offspring were—Buddhi (intelligence, wisdom, mind), Ahankar (pride, ego), the mind-heart complex called the 'Mana', the five perceptions (of smell, hearing, touch, taste and sight) forming the subtle body of the creature, the five elements (space, wind, fire, water, earth), the ten sense organs (five organs of perception—ear, nose, tongue, eye and skin, and five organs of action—hand, leg, mouth, anus and genitals), which together formed the gross body of the creature, the invisible Atma (pure consciousness) and Prakriti (nature of the individual creature). These are the twenty five basic constituents of creation.

So, according to Sankhya Shastra, there are twenty-five fundamental Elements or Tattwas as follows—Purush (the primal cosmic Male; the Viraat Purush), Prakriti (primal Nature), Mahtattva (the powerful Buddhi or intellect), Ahankar (ego, pride), the five organs of perception (i.e. the eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin), the five organs of action (i.e. the hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genitals), the Mana (mind), the five perceptions (such as the spoken word or speech, sight, smell, touch and taste), the five Bhuts (i.e. the five primary elements, the earth, water, fire, air and space or sky) = 25.

It further postulates that Brahm created Nature (cosmos) because it allowed itself to be covered or mired by the three Gunas—'Sata' meaning righteousness and virtuousness which are the best and noblest of qualities, 'Raja' meaning worldly passions and desires which are the medium or mediocre qualities leading to worldly desires, and 'Tama' meaning evils, sins and other mean mentalities leading to perversions and vices. The Purush, though he remains aloof, still gets shackled or attached to Prakriti, the creation, because of these three Gunas which act as ropes or strings that tie him down. This fact has been very stated in Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 5/10-12 and 6/10.

Breaking one's habits is tantamount to liberation and deliverance from this bondage, and it is called Mukti. The three Gunas are the causes of the myriad temperaments, natures, thought patterns and behaviours of all the creatures, because they have all these three qualities or virtues in them, though they vary in ratio or proportion. These three Gunas are also present in Mother Nature, giving rise to a populace which is so varied and diametrically opposite to each other, even virtually getting at each other's throat, because of the infinite possibilities created by their mixing in different proportions to mould the innate nature, inclinations and temperaments of a creature.

This school of philosophy says that there are five elementary 'Bhuts' in this creation—they are the earth, water, fire, wind and space which, in different permutations and combinations, form all the creatures who have a gross body. A creature, it says, has eleven organs— five organs of perception (ears, nose, eyes, tongue and skin), five organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, anus and genitals) and one organ called the Mana (mind and heart).

According to Mahopanishad, 1/4 – 6 of Sam Veda tradition, these twenty-five elements or Tattwas are the following—five organs of perception (ear, nose, tongue, eye, skin) + five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, genitals, excretory) + one Mana (mind) + one Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance) + one Pran (the vital life-giving breath; the essential vibrations of life; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life) + one Atma (soul) + one Buddhi (intelligence, wisdom, discrimination) + five Perceptions (sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch) + five Bhuts (earth, water, fire, air, space) = twenty-five elements.

Closely related to this philosophy is the concept of Sankhya Yoga. This philosophy is a combination of Sankhya philosophy and Yoga philosophy. In Shwetashwatar Upanishad 6/13 it is stated that the Supreme Being can be known by the means of 'Sankhya Yoga', i.e. by an intelligent fusion of 'Sankhya' and 'Yoga'.

The second chapter of Bhagvata Gita is also called Sankhya Yoga. Now, let us analyse this word. It has two parts—viz. 'Sankhya' meaning learning and knowledge, and 'Yoga' meaning a union, a conjunction, a fusion. Elsewhere, e.g. 5/5, this word has been used to signify 'Gyan' and 'Karma' or a conjunction of knowledge and the philosophy of doing deed. The 'Praanaagni-hotra Upanishad', 1, uses this word to mean 'intense thinking, deep contemplation or deep insight'. It is also, therefore, synonymous with 'Gyan Yoga' or the great concentration and diligent divergence of all energies of the creature to acquire truthful knowledge of the Truth and Reality behind what is apparent but not the whole truth, and what is not apparent at all.

These two paths are not separate, independent and distinct from one another. They are like the two legs by which one walks. The word 'Yoga' also means to bring about a union between two entities, to create a synergy between the mundane and the spiritual. Here it refers to the union between the Atma and the Brahm, or the coordination of various elements of the creature's body so that congenial atmosphere conducive to spiritual upliftment and enlightenment is created for the realisation of the true nature of the 'self', which would mean realisation of the presence of Brahm inside the very own self of the seeker. To bring this about, deep concentration of mind is needed along with the focusing of all the energies of the body in one single pursuit; this is meditation and contemplation.

The word 'Sankhya Yoga' therefore means a combination of both the eclectic values of Sankhya philosophy and that of Yoga. Hence, that which brings about a fusion or union between the known and the unknown, that which establishes a coordination between the creature's individual world and the cosmic world of the pure consciousness, that which brings the Atma, the pure 'self' of the creature close to the supreme 'Self' of the cosmos, that which links and ultimately brings about a merger of the single unit with its parent body, and that which helps in the creature's final liberation from the vicious cycle of birth and death, is called Sankhya Yoga.

Now the question arise how is this brought about? The answer is in the following the manifold path of Yoga besides acquisition of knowledge as expounded and espoused in the Upanishads. Yoga has basically two connotations—viz. (1) meditation and contemplation which aim in harnessing all the energy and potentials at the disposal of the creature and diverting them and concentrating them on one single goal chosen by the practitioner of Yoga; and (b) following other methods of achieving this aim as laid down in the scriptures dealing with Yoga.]

Canto 5, verse nos. 71-72

71-72. This Mantra of Pranav or Brahm, viz. OM, is potent enough to eliminate all spiritual obstacles.

There are four Bhumikas (stages of development of spiritual wisdom as described in detail in Canto 4)—viz. (i) 'Aarambha'—the beginning or initiation when one decides that he would find true wisdom and the correct path that would provide him with final emancipation and salvation; (ii) 'Ghat'—the acceptance and the subsequent filling of the inner self with noble thoughts and wisdom, becoming stable, calm, quiet, unmoving and unruffled like the air present inside an empty pitcher; (iii) 'Parichaya'—introduction to,

becoming aware of and getting acquainted with the cosmic Divinity that is present inside one's inner-self as the all-powerful consciousness known as the Atma; introduction to and acquaintance with the highly evolved and developed path of erudition, enlightenment and wisdom that enables an aspirant to become aware of his pure conscious self and the fact that this 'self' of his is the same as the cosmic 'Self' of creation that is known as the all-pervading and almighty Consciousness that universally resides in the bosom of all living beings as their 'self', and that this is the only spiritual Truth in this existence [71], and (iv) 'Nishpati'—completion or consummation of this process which implies the hearing of the cosmic Naad and tasting of the elixir of eternal bliss and ecstasy, known as Amrit, that comes with self-realisation and Brahm-realisation, and reaching the final frontier of spiritual practice which culminates in obtaining liberation and deliverance of the soul, the final emancipation and salvation whereby the individual soul merges with the supreme Soul of the cosmos, never to take birth again. This is the ultimate goal which any wise and enlightened spiritual aspirant would yearn for, would strive for, would aspire for and endeavour to attain.

Now each of these four stages is being elaborated upon. The 'beginning or initiation' is when the spiritual aspirant abandons all his involvement with the external world and its activities that have three causes¹ for coming into being [72]. (71-72).

[Note—¹The *three causes* that on the one hand result in the creation of the world and on the other hand can find a solution for this malady itself are the following—

(i) Upaadaan—the word means 'acceptance, acquisition, knowledge; restraining of the sense organs; a material from which something is prepared, the ingredient'. All these connotations can be applied here. For instance, the man first acquires the knowledge of this external material world and all its sense objects, and then accepts its existence as a matter of fact. Since the existence of this world is based on belief and information, and since this world can be accepted only through the medium of the sense organs of the body, it can be eliminated by the same means. That is, elimination of the deluding and artificial world can be achieved only by acquisition of correct knowledge and beliefs along with practicing restriction of the sense organs. These organs are responsible for the man becoming aware of the existence of the world and its most alluring charms, no matter how illusory or transient or painful they are in the long run. They entangle him in their web and tie him down in a vice-like grip with false promises of happiness, pleasure and comfort. If a man falls prey to this bait, he is trapped, while if he has the right knowledge and wisdom he would see right through the trick and avert a catastrophic destiny for himself.

(ii) Asamvaachi—to attempt to unite two dissimilar things into one entity; to try in futility to bring harmony between two basically disharmonious entities. For instance, it is like trying to unite water with fire. In the present case, this would mean to imagine something to be true although it is fundamentally and irrefutably false. That is, to imagine that this world is true and that it would indeed give peace and happiness is as incredulous and ridiculous to believe as imagining that the water seen in a desert mirage would actually quench one's thirst. As is obvious here, this utterly fallacious and basically erroneous conception can be removed only by correct knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment that comes with study of the scriptures and good company of saints and other holy men.

(iii) Nimitta—the word means 'motive, cause, reason, factor etc. which is the progenitor of something or some event; something done on behalf, or on account of'. For instance, the potter is the creator of the clay pot; he is a means by which the formless clod

of earth is given a definitive shape, design and size. So if there was no potter, there would be no pot with this shape or size. In the present context, the spiritual aspirant researches the cause of the coming into being of this world although it is universally accepted in the scriptures that it is false and illusionary. He wanders how this happens—one the one hand it is false, and on the other hand he can actually experience and witness the presence of the gross world first hand thereby proving that it does not exist. It is then that he begins to ponder on the great metaphysical doctrines and axiomatic maxims enshrined in the scriptures, and espoused and expounded by them repeatedly. Regular and discreet study of the scriptures with an open mind and a sincere desire to learn and benefit from their teachings helps the man to discover the hidden ‘truth’ that cannot be seen by the physical eye of the body. He finds that it is his imaginative mind that has visualized this world to appease the sense organs. Therefore the remedy is also in the mind itself—and it is to stop imagining and become real. The mind, the aspirant realises, has to be leashed in and channelised properly to derive real spiritual benefit from its stupendous powers that were being misused by it in pursuance of falsehood and artificiality known as the world. He discovers that what is seen, heard, felt, smelt and tasted is not always the ‘real and irrefutable truth’ of any thing or event. It is often misleading and far from the actual thing. For instance, the water in the mirage seen in the hot desert is very evident, but everyone knows that there is no water in it. Similarly, vested interests spread false rumors about certain things to suit their purpose, but it would be highly foolish to rely on them. When one suffers from high fever one feels extremely chilly though it may be a hot summer day with a scorching sun beating relentlessly down on earth. A sick man may not be able to relish any taste in food which might be as delicious and tasty as it can ever be for a healthy man. Artificial scents create an impression of fragrant flowers in the vicinity though there may be none nearby.]

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5. (b)

The Kath Rudra Upanishad:--

(Verse nos. 17-26)

17. [This verse and the ones following it describe the genesis of creation with a metaphysical perspective.]

From this indivisible, immutable and non-dual universal Consciousness existing in the form of the almighty and omnipotent Brahm were created the different Bhuts with their individual Atmas. This is the subtlest and the most sublime level of creation. It is was like imagining the presence of a snake in a harmless length of rope and then giving effect to this imagination and henceforth calling this ‘rope’ as ‘a snake’ in a world of make-belief¹.

Hence, the immutable, indivisible, universally uniform and invisible sky element that represented Brahm was imagined to be divided into five subtle forms. The first manifestation of this segregation appeared in the form of the ‘sound’ and the perception that hears that sound, i.e. the sense of hearing² (17).

[Note—¹In this instance, Brahm is like the ‘rope’ while the various characteristics attributed to it are like the ‘snake’. Brahm is a neutral entity like the rope; it has both the negative and the positive qualities hidden in its bosom which cancels each other out to make Brahm neutral. But when these qualities begin to polarize even in their minutest of fraction, in the subtlest dimension of space and for the smallest fraction of time, some characters specific to these qualities and the given circumstances begin to appear, thereby destroying Brahm’s neutrality. Gradually over time and as the process of evolution of creation progresses, these minor qualities become major and stand on their own feet, acquiring their individuality and personality. But since they had their origin in Brahm and since Brahm is the vital factor in their existence, it is said that Brahm has these qualities, attributes or characters in it.

For instance, all the five primary elements called Bhuts, such as sky, air, fire, water and earth, have their origin in one single Brahm. But as they grow they acquire their own independent set of qualities which are very different from Brahm and even from each other. For example, water is inherently cool and soothing while fire is scorching and hot. So to say that Brahm is cool like water or hot like fire would obviously be wrong. The great paradox is that these two apparently inimical entities do exist together in Brahm. For proof one can see one’s own body—the fluid part of it such as blood, mucous, urine and digestive and other juices in the body are water personified, while the inherent warmth of the body and even of the blood is a manifestation of the fire element.

Another example would make the point more clear. All types of trees, fruits and flowers have come from the same earth, but can anyone imagine what the earth would look like by seeing them, or for that matter how can the same earth produce such a vast species of members of the plant kingdom? Both the sky and air are said to be very subtle so much so that none of them can be caught or seen, but there is a vital difference between them. The sky does not move and cannot be felt, while the air moves and can be felt when it blows against the skin as wind.

In the case of the rope and snake cited in this verse, both appear alike from their external looks, but only out of ignorance is one treated as the other. A rope is harmless and even if one gets scared stiff thinking it to be a vicious snake it wouldn’t change the factual situation. Similarly, if one neglects a snake and catches hold of it as one does a rope, the snake would surely bite the man; he would not spare him on the pretext of his ignorance. So, to think that Brahm is corrupted like the world and impose this accusation on the former would not change Brahm’s innately immaculate and pristine pure nature. Likewise to think that the world is true because it is Brahm manifested in that form would not change the deluding and corrupted nature of this world. So a wise man analyses each thing in its own right before arriving at any conclusion. External appearances and ignorance of the truth more often than not create real horrendous consequences like the creation of ghosts and blood sucking phantoms out of mere shadows in a dark room!

²Primarily it refers to the creation of the five ‘Tanmatras’, or the five subtle sense perceptions, from the same consciousness that had these senses naturally but not in a segregated and compartmentalized form. These five Tanmatras are the senses of hearing, feeling and touch, seeing, smelling and tasting. All these were the properties of the consciousness even earlier, but they were not treated separately but as a composite character of consciousness. That is, if there is consciousness in anything, it must show these five primary characteristics—i.e. it would hear, see, smell, taste and feel. As creation evolved, these five Tanmatras evolved and acquired their own status as individual entities; they were segregated into having separate and independent existence as is proved by the fact that a person might not be able to see but can taste, hear, smell and feel the sense of touch, he might be dumb and deaf but feel, taste and see things. Once this illusory separation was done, once the basically immutable and indivisible

Atma was deemed to exhibit these characteristics in separate manner rather than as its composite character, the rest of the illusions followed in quick succession.

This and the following verses basically emphasis the point that all the different aspect of creation which an ignorant man recognises are basically different aspects of the same non-dual and indivisible entity. To cite an example, an ordinary man may treat water in an ocean, in a lake, in a river or a cup or a spoon as separate water bodies, but a wise and truly erudite man would see no difference between them. He would treat all forms of water as 'water' irrespective of the shape the water takes in different places it is found or the different vessels in which it is kept.

To take another example, an ordinary man would say that the water of the stream flowing down the mountain is mineral water, the ocean water is salty, the lake water is sweet, the river water is turbid and polluted, and the well water is too hard to drink because of dissolved salts in it etc. But for a chemist this is not the case, for a water molecule, in its true and real form, consists of two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen and contain no extraneous elements if it is to be called 'water'. Therefore, to say that the water is 'mineral, salty, sweet, sour, polluted and turbid' is a misnomer and misleading about the truth of water. Similarly, the pure consciousness in the form of the Atma is universally the same and shows all the signs of life, but in ignorance it is believed to exhibit these conscious signs separately in distinct organs which are assigned specific functions.]

18. Next in the progression of evolvement of the visible creation came into the being the second element called the wind or the air element from the first element called the sky element¹, and this second element (wind or air) resulted in the creation of the perception of touch².

Thereafter, from the air or the wind element, came into being the fire, the water and the earth elements successively in that order³ (18).

[Note--¹The wind or air is the second subtle primary element created, and since it evolved from the sky element it had the characteristics very similar to its parent, the sky. That is, the wind exhibited characters of being invisible, all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresence, vast and infinite very much like the sky element. The only obvious discernible difference was its ability to show signs of movement or activity which the sky lacked. The wind was the first revelation of Brahm's stupendous physical prowess and strong arm as proved by the fact that violent storms, tornadoes and hurricanes cause so widespread havoc that no other force of Nature can replicate. The wind can even blow out and overcome the next fierce manifestation of Brahm, i.e. the fire element. It is the wind element which infused 'life' called the Pran into the otherwise basically gross, lifeless and inane body of the creature and makes it alive and active, infusing it with such stupendous abilities that a petite-looking individual is able to build huge structures and magnificent edifices which hold everyone in a spell-binding awe. A body is able to get up, move and perform all the activities because of this wind element inherently present inside it as its Pran.

It ought to be noted here that a hierarchy is followed here—at the top is the sky element, next comes the wind element, then would follow the fire, the water and the earth element. The entity placed at a higher level would naturally have an authority a notch higher as compared to the one placed a rung below it. That is why the sky can overcome even the wind element as proved by the fact that a wild storm might blow for hours in one corner of the sky but as its progresses ahead its violence and punch dissipates

gradually so much so that when it finally reaches some other part of the sky it gets completely humbled, tamed and docile; it loses its ferocity and punch.

²The sense of touch exhibited by the wind is for everyone to witness when one feels the wind rustling against and caressing one's face and ruffling one's hair when one stands facing its flow even with eyes, ears and nose closed. Even a slight movement of air can be felt. The sense perception of 'touch' was first felt when this air came into being because prior to that the sky could not introduce this sense as it had no movement. So, the perception of touch has its genesis in the wind or air element.

³Modern science has established that this world as we know it today was primarily a vast body of gases rotating violently. There was cosmic debris strewn all around as a left-over of the Big Bang, and it swirled along with the accompanying gases. The forces of gravity, the centripetal and centrifugal forces, and other such natural forces of physics came into play simultaneously resulting in the formation of planets and other cosmic bodies. The entire process of turning, shaking and churning took place in the vast bowl of the sky which acted as the crucible of creation, and as time progressed the elements separated from one another according to their density and grossness, with the denser amongst them settling at the bottom and the lighter ones rising to the top. All had their existence in the sky, and since they rotated round and round violently, this circular motion created the 'wind' element in the cosmos. This peculiar origin of the wind element in circular motion of the primordial gel of creation is indicated even today when we observe that wind rotates in a circular motion in whirlwinds, cyclonic storms and twisters or tornadoes which move ahead while rotating rapidly. This is the basic characteristic feature of the wind element—movement, circular as well as lateral and frontal.

This violent churning, random collision, the resultant abrasions, implosions and explosions etc. that might have taken place in the distant past created formidable friction and generated immense amount of heat and energy which resulted in the creation of the 'fire element'. As time passed, the rapidity and violence of movement abated, resulting in a chilling and cooling effect which was followed by condensation, and thus the 'water element' was created.

The 'fire element' was inherent in this creation as the driving force that enabled the entire process to proceed ahead. The friction created between various elements which were being roughed-up against each other in the process of creation created heat and light. Since energy does not vanish but only changes its form, the kinetic energy of rotation transformed into heat energy and light energy, and together this energy in its various connotations took up its habitat as the latent 'fire element' in the elements that came into being. These elements trapped this fire element inside their pores much like sponge traps water. When this sponge is squeezed, the water spurts out. Likewise, when the elements are subjected to pressure and external exertion, fire springs out. This is why when coal, gunpowder and other inflammable elements such as gases or petroleum products are subjected to external agitation such as heat or pressure, the fire element trapped inside them jumps out either as visible fire or as an explosion.

Further solidification was a natural progression as cooling progressed and the violent revolutions and rotations slowed down, and the heavier elements settled down at the lower end of the cosmic bowl and hardened. Thus was created the 'earth element'.

This pyramidal structure is evident even today in the heaviest and grossest of earth being at the lowest rung of the world and forming its base upon which the entire world rests. The next element, which is subtler than it, is the water element which floats on its surface as the vast ocean and sea, and drenches every corner of earth. The next element, the fire element, is dry and finds its place on land. Its subtlety is evident when its flame rises up instead of moving in a horizontal direction in the way the water moves. The

water has an innate tendency to move in a horizontal direction instead of the vertical direction like the fire element. The third element, i.e. the air is above the surface of the earth, indicating that it is lighter than the earlier three elements. This air element is immeasurable and subtle; it can be compared with smoke which fills the entire space available, and has a natural tendency to move not only upwards but in all the directions available to it. Like the smoke, the air cannot be caught hold of. Finally we have the sky element which is so subtle and sublime that it fills the entire void of the vast bowl of creation as far as it stretches, even to those corners of this creation where the wind and air elements cannot go. That is why the far reaches of the cosmos do not have 'wind or air' as we understand these two terms to mean. The sky cannot be known and measured; its dimensions and outlines are not known because of its subtlety and sublimity.]

19. [This verse no. 19 describes the subtlest and most sublime form that the Atma takes at the macrocosmic level of creation, while verse no. 20 describes its more grosser form at this level. The verses that follow, i.e. verse nos. 21-26, deal with the microcosmic counterpart of this Atma at various levels of grossness or subtlety in relation to the individual creature.]

The Supreme Being (Brahm) who is also known by the name of Shiva used these five elementary entities to mould the rest of the universe or cosmos from them. [In other words, these five elements, viz. sky, air, fire, water and earth, were used as the building block or bricks and mortar from which the entire edifice of creation was crafted by the master craftsman called Shiva. The uniformity and non-duality between Shiva and Brahm has been expounded in Krishna Yajur Veda's Dakshin Murti or Dakshin Mukhi Upanishad, and Skanda Upanishad, verse nos. 9, 13.] (19).

20. *In the fathomless bowls of this universe, the animate creation consisting of different forms of life such as the Devas (gods), Danavas (non-gods; the demons), Yakshas (mythological semi-Gods who are employed by Kuber, the treasurer of the Gods, to guard his treasury and keep his gardens), Kinnars (heavenly dancers and singers who are also a kind of semi-god), human beings, animals, birds and other creatures of the living kingdom are actually different manifestations of the same universal Atma. This Atma had to assume one or the other of these distinct forms depending upon the deeds done by it in its previous form¹ (20).

[Note-¹In the beginning obviously there was only one type of life—i.e. there was universal brotherhood and amity. Then arose jealousy and ill-will amongst the various units of this life, leading to hatred and animosity. People become selfish and did deeds not for the general welfare and upliftment of the society as a whole but to satisfy their own desires and gratify their own sense organs. Each individual made his own decisions; he did deeds that he thought fit and took actions that he thought would serve his self-interest, overlooking in the process what was proper, auspicious, righteous, and sanctioned by the scriptures. This is the basic foundation upon which this verse rests. There was so much variations in deeds and actions, and hence obviously in their results, that the generations that came after the initial phases of creation mutated beyond recognition, transforming what was a homogenous society into a varied and multifarious one with so much variation that no two units looked alike and even had any resemblance to the parent Brahm from which everything has emerged. This created a mind boggling

array of characters, natures and temperaments, and equal number of countless individuals depicting uniqueness characteristic to them.

*This verse can be interpreted as follows also—In the beginning there was only one universal cosmic Consciousness known as the Atma that was supreme, and it was known as the transcendental Brahm. In due course of time, this Atma lost its neutrality because it wished to do something. Nothing can be physically done if one remains inactive and neutral. In terms of modern chemistry and physics, if the medium is neutral and has to retain its neutrality and homogeneity, then no reaction and change can take place in it. This is because any reaction is bound to change the character of this medium. So as long as the Atma would remain non-interested, non-active, immobile, neutral, renounced and dispassionate, it would not do anything. Since it wished to do something, it had to break this taboo and indulge in some activity, and therefore its neutrality and non-duality got corrupted. This is because it had to make choices; it had to decide between given options. So it became partisan and biased; it saw one option as good and the other as not so good. For instance, a sleeping man is absolutely neutral and unbiased towards any thing in this world, but when he wakes up he begins to differentiate between this and that depending upon what is good to his self-interest. Looking differently and citing this same example, a sleeping man does nothing, but if he wishes to do anything he would have to wake up and show some movement of his limbs, because simply keeping still and hoping that some work would be done is a most stupid idea.

As soon as he loses his neutrality and begins to depend upon his sense organs in order to relate to this world of deed and actions, the organs get to have the better of him and exploit his dependence upon them. They decide what he likes and what he does not. For instance, the nose has the innate inclinations to smell sweet fragrances, so it would prevail upon the mind and the man in turn to go towards those things that smell sweet and away from smells that are pungent or repugnant and repulsive for the nose. Thus the man begins to exhibit partisan attitudes; his equanimity and neutrality are lost. This simple example is applicable to the cosmic Consciousness called the Atma or Brahm.

Thus, when the inherently neutral Brahm decided to create this creation, it had to assume different roles. In other words, the same Atma assumed different forms as demons, gods, humans, birds and all other forms of living beings in this creation. Each of these units highlighted the predominance of one or the other chief characteristics of Brahm. The uniqueness in these characteristics was caused by the combination and proportion of the three Gunas such as Sata, Raja and Tama which determine the nature and temperament of any individual.

Once this chain-reaction got started, it became unstoppable, and the original immaculate and non-dual Atma got mutated beyond recognition. One simple and single action or deed produced its own result or reward or fruit, and when this was tasted by the Atma it got inadvertently sucked in a bog of deeds and results from which it could not extricate itself for generation after generation. The Atma hopped from one deed and its consequences to another like a bird flying from one branch of a tree to perch on another. Each perch was littered with the bird's droppings.

All the forms listed in this verse, viz. gods, semi-gods, demons, humans, animals, birds etc. showcase the many forms in which the same Atma has manifested—at the highest level as the Gods, and at the lowest level as the birds. And to extend this logic further, to more lower level as worms, insects, single-celled living organisms such as amoeba and bacteria etc., or further still as immobile life in the form of the members of the plant kingdom. All of them have the same Atma residing in them as their 'true self' but with a different set of coverings surrounding this Atma in the form of their physical bodies which helps to distinguish the Atma as a God, a semi-god, a demon, a human, an animal, a bird etc.

Therefore, a wise man is he who does not look at the outer covering of the Atma to recognise the individual Jiva or the living being, but in the entity that is hidden or wrapped inside this outer covering called the body. It is this body that has got so many names as a god, a semi-god, a demon, a human, an animal, a bird etc.]

21. [Verse nos. 21-26 describe the Panch Koshas and Panch Atmas.*]

The gross body made up of bones and veins etc. of all living beings called Jivas is therefore the result of the deeds done by them. [That is, the Atma, which is the true identity of the individual, assumes a particular physical form, i.e. assumes a particular gross body, depending upon the deeds done by it in its previous life.]¹

Thus, the gross body of the creature is the Anna Maye Kosh or the food sheath² of the Atma. That is, the pure consciousness has assumed this gross body which is formed and sustained by the food eaten by the individual. When the consciousness reveals itself in this sheath, it is known as the 'Anna Maye Atma', or the consciousness that depends upon food for its survival and which has a gross physical structure much like the gross form in which food exists in creation (as vegetables, cereals, fruits and other eatables)³ (21).

[Note—*Why the five Koshas are called the Panch Atma have been explained in note to verse no. 23 below.

The five Koshas have been described in other Upanishad also. Some of them are (i) Rig Veda—Mudagal Upanishad, Canto 4, verse 5; (ii) Shukla Yajur Veda—Paingalopanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 4; and (iii) Krishna Yajur Veda—Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 2, Anuvak 3-6; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 5.

¹This concept has been explained in verse no. 20 above. Besides this, the Adhyatma Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes the concept of doing deeds and its effect on the spiritual liberation or bondage of the creature in fine detail in its verse nos. 49-60. The 'Karma Chakra' or the giant wheel of deeds and their consequences has been described in the Shwetashwatar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 6, verse no. 3. The three Paths followed by a creature according to the deeds done by him are referred to in Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 4/7. The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, verse no. 48 describes how one can become free from the fetters created by 'deeds'. The Niralambo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 11-12 describes the concept of Karma. The Sarwasaar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 6 describes the concept of how and why the creature becomes the doer of deeds. These concepts and the fact that a creature's destiny depends upon the deeds done by him have been elaborately described elsewhere also in (i) Rig Veda's Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1; (ii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 3/1/3, 3/2/11-12, 3/9/28, 4/3/12, 33, 36, 5/10-5/11, 6/1/1-6, 6/2/2,14-16, etc.; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 57-58, 66; (iii) Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 5, Section 3-10; Canto 7, Section 21; (iv) Krishna Yajur Veda's Taittiriyo-pahishad, Valli 2, Anuvak 6; Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 1, verse no. 20, and the whole of Canto 1, Valli 2 right up to Canto 2, Valli 3; Skanda Upanishad, verse no. 7.

What happens to ignorant people after death is explained in Brihad Aranyak 4/4/1. The Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse nos. 23-26 defines what constitutes of true 'Karma Yoga'. The Mandal Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, 2/4/2-3 describes the philosophy of Deeds.

²The Atma lives surrounded by five sheaths, called the 'Panch Koshas'. These Koshas form the composite structure recognised as the body of the creature or Jiva. The Atma is the 'true self' of the individual Jiva, while these Koshas are the covering sheaths

which enclose the Atma and form its habitat during its sojourn in this life. They wrap the Atma and form its outer recognizable form. These Koshas are what give the Atma its visible and recognizable form in this world—such as Godhead, a demon, a human, an animal and a bird. Therefore we can compare the Jiva or his true self the Atma as the glittering gem gifted wrapped in a five-layered cloth which is so magnificently wonderful and fascinatingly unique that more often than not it outshines the glory of the principal entity for which they were meant. In other words, one is so awe-struck by the external body that he forgets to even un-wrap the package and peer in to look what is hidden inside.

The outermost is called the food sheath or Anna Maye Kosh. The rest of the Koshas are enumerated in the following verses.

³This is an obvious observation because no one has seen the sublime, subtle and invisible ‘consciousness’ as having an existence except in the form of the signs of life shown by the gross physical body which is sustained by the food eaten by the individual. Thus for all practical purposes, this consciousness, which is perceived in the form of the external form of the body, is recognised as being synonymous with it, i.e. as the Anna Maye Atma in line with the body being called the Anna Maye Kosh because of its dependence on food.]

22. Inside this Anna Maye Kosh is another sheath called the ‘Pran Maye Kosh’ or the vital wind sheath. This is the second form in which the consciousness known as the Atma is recognised. Thus, the consciousness that lives inside the gross body in a more subtle form as the vital life-sustaining winds is recognised as the ‘Pran Maye Atma’ in honour of these winds, and also because the Atma and the Pran are both synonymous with each other as far as the life of the individual is concerned as he cannot live without the either of them¹.

Next in this progression comes the ‘Mano Maye Atma’ or the consciousness that has revealed itself as the Mana or the subtle mind of the individual. This pertains to the Mano Maye Kosh or the mind sheath. This form of the consciousness is subtler than the Pran Maye Atma². (22).

[Note—¹Like its predecessor the Anna Maye Atma, the consciousness that flows inside the body and is represented by the vital winds such as Pran, Apaana, Vyan, Samaan and Udaan etc. is known as the Pran Maye Atma, named as such because the vital life sustaining winds are collectively called ‘Pran’.

²The Mana is the subtle mind of the creature and the consciousness that drives the mind and keeps it active and enabled to carry on with its magnificent duties is the Atma consciousness known as Mano Maye Atma.]

23. The fourth form that the consciousness takes is called the ‘Vigyan Maye Atma’ because it pertains to the intellect sheath called the Vigyan Maye Kosh or the intellect sheath. This is subtler than the Mano Maye Atma and lives surrounded by the latter.

Subtler than all the other forms of conscious existence of the individual is known as the ‘Anand Maye Atma’ which pertains to the Anand Maye Kosh or the bliss sheath. This is the innermost layer that surrounds the pure consciousness and is like the transparent veil covering the lighted lamp because it radiates the natural character of the Atma present inside it. Its natural characteristic is to be eternally blissful, contented and happy (23).

[Note—¹It would be noted that the structure that has unfolded is like a circle within a circle. The outer and the first circle is the Anna Maye Atma pertaining to the Anna Maye Kosh or the food sheath, followed by the second inner circle called the Pran Maye Atma pertaining to the Pran Maye Kosh or the vital wind sheath inside which is the third circle of Mano Maye Atma pertaining to the Mano Maye Kosh or the mental sheath, then comes the fourth circle of Vigyan Maye Atma pertaining to the Vigyan Maye Kosh or the intellect sheath, and finally the fifth one known as the Anand Maye Atma pertaining to the Anand Maye Kosh or the bliss sheath. These sheaths are called ‘Atma’ because they reflect consciousness and life in its various vibrant hues. For instance, the external Kosha called the Pran Maye Kosh which forms the basis of all organs of senses such as those related to perception and those to action have any value and significance for the creature only as long as they have ‘life and consciousness’ pulsating in each of its pore, cell and tissue. Otherwise they would be worthless and as good as being non-existent. What good and of use is a body which cannot see, hear, taste, feel and smell, or one which cannot move, hold anything, expel waste products from the inside, regenerate and procreate, and generally make life happy and livable for the Jiva—or in brief a body which has no consciousness in it? Since ‘life’ in all its connotations is synonymous with ‘consciousness’ or the Atma, this Kosha which depends upon food to survive is called the Anna Maye Atma. And this is also the reason why food is equivalent to ‘life’ or Pran vis-à-vis a Jiva; food is the Atma of all living beings. They just cannot survive without food. The food is necessary for very survival of all life forms because it provides the outer covering that not only provides the necessary energy and strength but acts as a protective covering for the Atma. This is also the reason why the type of food eaten by a creature helps to classify him—such as non-vegetarians and vegetarians; such as carnivorous, herbivorous and omnivorous; such as civilized eaters or savage cannibals etc.

This logic can be extended to cover all the other four remaining sheaths. For instance, the Pran Maye Kosh is called the Pran Maye Atma because the signs of life and vitality that the vital winds present inside the body depict are a reflection of the presence of the consciousness in the body itself, for otherwise the same wind that is also present outside the body does not show any signs of life-sustaining qualities as the one present inside the body. This innate wind element of creation exhibits astounding ability to sustain life and performs miraculous duties of regulating so many functions of the body that life without wind is unthinkable. Had there been no consciousness in the body, the same wind would be worthless and wouldn’t be able to sustain and make the body alive as is proved by the fact a dead body from which the Atma has left shows no signs of life and activity inspite of the wind element remaining in it. Thus the wind element that derives its life-sustaining abilities due the presence of the Atma is named after it as the Pran Maye Atma. It is actually the virtues of the Atma reflected in the wind element called the Pran. Both the Pran and the Atma are therefore treated as being synonymous.

Next is the Mano Maye Atma. The mind is the center that is the power-house of the living being; without the mind the creature would not receive any information from the outside world, cannot relate to it and cannot do anything whatsoever. The mind regulates all its functions. This is a clear indication of the mind being a manifestation of the Atma’s grand virtues. If there was no consciousness in the body, such as the case of a dead body in which the physical organ called the brain is still present in the head, the mind would not be able to think. The subtle and sublime entity that enables the mind and the subtle heart to think and have emotions is the Atma present inside the body, and therefore the grand virtues and characters of the Atma that are reflected in the form of the creature’s Mana is called the Mano Maye Atma.

The Vigyan Maye Atma would then be the virtues of the Atma as reflected by the magnificent potentials and powers as depicted by the intellect present in the creature. The

ability of the creature to research and analyse, to ponder and think deeply, to discriminate between the good and the bad etc. are manifestations of the stupendous abilities of the Atma, and therefore that unit or Kosha of the body that carries these functions is called the Vigyan Maye Atma.

Finally, there is the Anand Maye Kosh which encloses the Atma itself. This sheath that encloses the Atma acquires the latter's grand virtues of eternal blissfulness, contentedness and happiness because of its very close proximity to it. When a wise and enlightened Jiva comes in contact with this sheath he finds only one predominant character, and that is of eternal and undiluted 'Anand' or the state of blessedness marked by beatitude and felicity. He then realises that the closest sheath (the Anand Maye Kosh) is a reflection of these eclectic and sublime virtues of the Atma, and therefore it has been named the Anand Maye Atma.

The concept of the same Atma having various life-forms extending from one Kosha or one-celled organism to five Koshas or five-celled organism can be understood in the following manner also. The Jivas or living creatures in the living world have been classified into five broad categories and their respective forms are as follows:—

(i) Udbhij—these are those life forms that are born from seeds, such as members of the plant kingdom. These have only one Kalaa or aspect of the Atma called Anna Maye Kosh or Kalaa. In other words, they depend on food and become food for others higher up in the evolutionary ladder.

(ii) Swedaj—they are those which are born from dampness and sweat, such as fungi, algae, bacteria, germs, mosquito, lice, flies etc. They have two Kalaas, viz. Anna Maye and Pran Maye. That is, they are formed from food, they live for food and they die as food. Besides this, they also exhibit signs of life, e.g. the mosquito and lice have life like any other member of the animal kingdom.

(iii) Andaj—they are placed higher up in the evolutionary ladder, and are born from eggs, whether inside the mother's womb or outside. Such birds as pigeon, sparrow, parrot, peacock etc. come under this category. They have three Kalaas which are Anna Maye, Pran Maye and Mano-maye. The last Kalaa refers to the fact that such creatures have a mind and heart which enables them to think, albeit in a primitive level.

(iv) Jarayuj—these are the creatures that are born as embryo that develops inside the mother's womb. Under this class come the animals such as horses, cows, dogs, elephants etc. They have four Kalaas, such as Anna Maye, Pran Maye, Mano-maye and Vigyan Maye.

(v) The last Kalaa refers to their ability to have a higher level of thinking ability called intelligence. The human being comes under this last category with the added benefit of having five Kalaas. Besides the four Kalaas mentioned above in other creatures of this category, the man has the fifth one and it called the Anand Maye Kosh. It is only possessed by a man and not by other creatures in the sense that the man can realise the true meaning of the terms 'bliss and happiness that is eternal and substantial' by the virtue of his attaining higher level of intelligence and his ability to delve into the secrets of the concept of truth itself and then realising that kind of happiness and bliss that is not superficial and which is not limited to enjoyment of the sensual pleasures of the body and the material comforts of the world, but which has a holistic and all-inclusive dimension that incorporates the spirit or the soul.]

24. These different forms of the Atma enumerated above are just for the purpose of study and each depends upon the other in the order mentioned above—viz. the outer Anna Maye Atma is filled from the inside and is sustained by the Pran Maye Atma. Likewise,

the Pran Maye Atma is filled by the Mano Maye Atma from the inside and is sustained by it (24).

25. The Mano Maye Atma is filled with the Vigyan Maye Atma from the inside and is sustained by it, and likewise the latter is filled by the Anand Maye Atma and sustained by it from the inside¹ (25).

[Note—¹This concept can be understood by a simple example of the earth. The earth's body consists of layers after layers of rocks and other structural materials of varying density and strength, with each inner layer forming a base and support for its immediate outer layer, and this progression continues till we reach the outer surface of the earth which would obviously collapse if the earth were not supported by these inner rings that form the different strata of the earth's structure. It is like the case of a hollow ball which cannot survive any external pressure and beating as compared to a solid ball which would not collapse despite it being punched and hammered or pressed in from the outside.

That is, the inner-most core of this ball-like structure consists of the Anand Maye Kosh and the consciousness that gives it its life is called the Anand Maye Atma. This central core is surrounded by the Vigyan Maye Kosh and the consciousness that lends it its vitality and life is called the Vigyan Maye Atma. This applies to the other layers also—viz. the Mano Maye Atma corresponding to the Mano Maye Kosh surrounds this Vigyan Maye Atma and is surrounded by the Pran Maye Atma pertaining to the Pran Maye Kosh; and finally the Anna Maye Atma pertaining to the Anna Maye Kosh sits comfortably upon this Pran Maye Kosh.

This verse implies that all the forms of the Atma as enumerated in these verses are basically the same consciousness performing different functions in these individual forms and therefore there is no difference between them. The different layers envisaged are hypothetical entities delineated for the purposes of understanding of how the creation works but refer to the same consciousness that prevails throughout the entire being of the individual. No one form of the Atma can be sheared off from the other if the individual is expected to survive as a living individual entity. For example, it is impractical to extract the mind and let the intellect function, or to shear off the external covering of the body called the Anna Maye Kosh and expect the other parts of the body to live and survive. Each unit depends upon the other.

The body of the creature has been crafted by the supreme creator most intelligently and wisely. His expertise in craftsmanship and his prudence is evident when we examine what precautions he took to protect the Atma or the 'true self' of the creature. In order to protect the subtle Atma which is the most delicate and sublime entity in creation from being harmed, he protected it with a five-tier security mechanism consisting of these five Koshas. Even if one protective ring got somehow damaged, the Atma would still have the other rings for its protection. For instance, even if the eye fails, the consciousness is not much affected because the other organs gear up to replace this shortfall and become more alert, active and diligent. Even if the body is paralyzed and unable to move, all the internal organs work smoothly to protect life in it. A mad man whose mind is not under control or is malfunctioning can still survive and live a long life just like a stupid fool who has no intellect and its wisdom. Again, even though the man is most unhappy and disgusted in life indicating the absence of a properly-tuned Anand Maye Kosha, he would still live on and on showing that the Atma is protected by the other sheaths in the absence of cooperation from the Anand Maye Kosh which has malfunctioned.

In this context it is pertinent to note that a wise and enlightened man in terms of metaphysics is one who is 'self realised', i.e. who has 'realised' his 'true self' by his own

efforts. In other words, he has acquainted himself with the truthful entity known as the Atma or pure consciousness living in a house having these five structural walls called the Koshas. The world erroneously recognises the body consisting of these five Koshas as the gentleman concerned, but it is a grave misconception, because the house cannot be the same as its inhabitant. Here the inhabitant is the Atma, and the house is the five-layered body.]

26. The Anand Maye Atma representing the bliss sheath surrounds the innermost core called the pure consciousness or the Atma representing the supreme Brahm that is an all-pervading and universal entity residing in the bosom of all the living beings as their inner self or inner being. There is no other thing present inside this Brahm, and so the latter is deemed to be the ultimate core of all that exists. It is like the hidden and mysterious power present inside a seed that enables it to create a tree virtually from nothing (26).

[Note—The individual creature derives its physical form and shape with the help of the Anna Maye Kosh or the external gross body; its energy, vitality, stamina and strength from the Pran Maye Kosh or the vital winds which pump in air and fresh energy into the body and drains out toxic waste from it and generally help the various organs of the body to perform their respective duties; its desires and wishes and aspirations from the Mano Maye Kosh or the mental sheath because it is the mind that makes all hopes and desires besides creating this world of material objects and the need to enjoy them; its higher level of intellectual achievements through the Vigyan Maye Kosh or the intellect sheath, and its ultimate bliss through the Anand Maye Kosh or the bliss sheath. Since these functions are manifestations of the various aspects of creation, they are called the different forms of the same Atma because all that lives is nothing but the Atma. The different names assigned to the Atma are only because it performs different functions.]

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5. (c) The Shwetashwatar Upanishad:--

(Canto 4; Canto 5, verse no. 5; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3)

Canto 4

1. He who was all alone at the beginning of creation and had no attributes, used his magnificent mystical and majestic powers and maverick tricks to assume numerous forms and shapes having countless attributes. At the time of the end of this creation, he withdraws the entire creation into himself (like the octopus withdrawing its tentacles). Let that stupendous and majestic supreme Lord bless us with an auspicious mind and intellect (so that we inculcate wisdom and intelligence) (1).

2. That same supreme Lord (Brahm) has manifested in varied forms such as the fire, the sun, air or wind and the moon. It is he who has taken the form of the red planet Mars, the creator Brahma, the water element as well as of Prajapati, the first male in visible creation on earth and the first father of the human race (2).

3. Oh Lord! You are the male as well as the female. You are the son as well as the daughter. It is you who reveal yourself as an old man walking with the help of a stick as well as a new embryo which develops into this myriad world of astonishing diversity (3).

4. It is you who has revealed himself as the blue/azure colour (of the sky), the kite (the sun), the green colour (plants and vegetation), the red-eyed one (the planet Mars and the Fire), the clouds (the rains), the seasons and the seven oceans. You are the Lord who has infinite authority and endless sway over all that exists. You are all-pervading and omnipresent. It is you from whom the entire creation has come into being (4).

[Note—The cosmic creation is being referred to here as well as in the next verse no. 5, hence the units of the cosmos at the macro level are the apt metaphors cited above. Some wise scholars have referred to more mundane metaphors, but they do not fit into the wider picture of the cosmic creator. Even when we consider the progression in which the creation came into being, it was started at the vast cosmic level and then metamorphosed into those forms which were closer at home on the earth. For one, the earth was a late comer in this cosmic scheme of things, and second, it was and still is merely one speck of dust on the shore of the cosmic ocean for astronomers have discovered numerous earth-like planets, still in their nascent stage of development, orbiting around distant stars representing the sun.

However, it would be in order of things that the other view is also presented here. According to this, the blue colour refers to the blue-tinged bee, and the green colour and the red-eyed creature is the parrot.]

5. There is one she-goat (the nanny goat)¹ having a three-coloured coat (skin). These colours are red (indicating the predominance of Raja quality), white (indicating Sata quality in predominance) and black (symbolic of the predominance of Tama quality)². This she-goat produces offspring in its own likeness. [That is, it produces off-spring having the predominance of one or more of the qualities represented by the three colours mentioned here.]

This she-goat is subjected to two types of treatment by the he-goat or the ram. One, she is enjoyed by the latter to produce offspring in his likeness (as described above). And two, he remains detached and indifferent to her presence, even to the extent that he does not even glance at her overtures³. [Refer verse no. 6 below also.] (5).

[Note—¹In the cosmic scale of things, this verse refers to the Mother Nature as the she-goat.

²The *three colours* are symbolic representations of the basic nature of all the creatures born in this creation. The Chandogya Upanishad, 3/5/4-3/9 and 6/3-4 uses these three colours to describe the different types of characters called Sata, Raja and Tama defining the three basic types of creatures and their individual personality traits and temperaments that exist in this creation.

The Paingal Upanishad, 1/3-9 of the Shukla Yajur Veda clearly states that these three colours were the ones with which Nature representing creation was born and how the supreme creator had subtly entered the entire creation to be uniformly present in its every minutest of corner.

The concept of Gunas affecting the Atma has been elaborately dealt with in various Upanishads, for example the Maitrayanyu Upanishad, 1/11, 2/5, 3/5, etc. of the Sam

Veda tradition. Canto 6, verse no. 16 of the present Shwetashwatar Upanishad describes how the supreme Brahm was the creator of all the three Gunas. How the three Gunas were used by Brahm to create this world has been beautifully described in Paingalo-panishad, 1/7 and 2/3. Canto 2, verse no. 3 describes how Sata and Raja were used, while Canto 1, verse no. 7 narrates the use of Tama. How the three Gunas affect the man's character have been very precisely and expressly narrated in Shaarirako-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda in its verse nos. 7-13.

The three characteristic qualities called the three Gunas inherently present in the creature, in different ratios, are the three thought textures which bombard the mind. These three thought textures are manifestations of the 'Vrittis and Vasanas' (inherent tendencies or desires) of the creature which mire its pure conscious Atma or soul as a covering or veil. These three basic qualities or Gunas which are inherent in all the living beings determine their nature, habits, temperaments and inclinations which in turn decide the behaviour, personality and outlook of each individual in this world.

(a) 'Sata Guna or quality' is the best quality present in a creature and it is marked by a predominance of auspiciousness, righteousness, virtuousness and noble qualities. It is marked by such high standards of ethical existence that have, as their characteristic features, such qualities as coolness of head, peace, contentedness, humility, devotion, wisdom, mercy, compassion, creativity, selflessness, service, righteousness, virtuousness, holiness and nobility of thought and action etc. As is evident, these qualities are the best qualities that one can have in him; they have a spiritual dimension to them; they are spiritually uplifting and give a divine halo to those who practice them.

The Sata Guna or quality is the veil covering the soul like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort. It is the foremost and the best amongst the three characteristics of a creature such as good and positive virtuous such as righteousness, creativity, noble deeds and thoughts, the positive qualities of service, benevolence, mercy, devotion, wisdom, holiness, piety etc.

(b) 'Raja Guna' is the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, desires and attachments and their natural offshoots in a creature. It covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, a stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, desires, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, desire to sustain etc. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the Satwic qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

The Rajsic quality or Guna can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality. Rajsic tendencies are the second best quality which produces worldly desires, ambitions, passions, selfishness, various obsessions, desire to sustain and expand etc.

(c) 'Tama Guna' is the third quality which is the meanest and basest of the three types of qualities in a creature. It is marked by evilness, perversions and sinfulness. It is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, leading him to such negative traits as sins, vices, perversions, greed, avarice, haughtiness, pride, lust, attachments, yearnings, intoxication, wild behaviour, promiscuity, evils, utter disregard for anything which is righteous, ethical and noble etc. In brief, behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraving for the creature, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness of demeanors. It is the lowest and meanest of the three qualities leading to a person's downfall, ignominy and ruin.

The Tamsic quality or Guna covering the soul is like a foetus in the womb covered by the embryonic membrane—they cannot be removed easily and require diligence,

effort, dedicated and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the three characteristics, the worst type to possess, and is marked by such negative traits as sin, evil, perversions, immorality, vices, misdemeanors, anger, inertia, delusions, deception, gloom, ignorance et al.

The various permutations and combinations of these three qualities create a particular 'nature' of an individual giving him his individuality and his special characters which are unique to him; they determine his temperament, behaviour, thought process et al.

³The ram or the he-goat is used as a metaphor for the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic aspect of Brahm's revelation as well as the creature's male form at the micro level of creation. Fundamentally there are two basic mental bearings and psychological responses that a creature exhibits in its interactions with the world—it either enjoys the interaction, finding pleasure and comfort in this world and its material objects, or wishes to be left alone and remains detached from it. The creature with the first type of temperament is the ram who gets involved in producing offspring with the she-goat, and by extension it refers to the Viraat Purush who got involved with his own maverick Maya (his own delusion creation powers) to start this process of creation. The second type of temperament signifies the ram who is a renunciate and self-realised creature that has realised the falsehood of this artificial world and does not wish to have anything to do with it. The first has a propensity of getting involved and getting caged like a bird, while the other prefers to keep all entanglements at bay, preferring to remain free as a bird out of its cage.

Therefore, the first type of ram is the ordinary creature which remains engrossed in this world and gets sucked in the vortex of joys and pains, while the other ram is the self-realised soul who gets liberation and deliverance from all these entrapments.]

6. [This verse uses the beautiful metaphor of two friendly birds perched on the same tree.] There are two friendly birds on the same tree.

[Here, one bird symbolises the Jivatma or the creature, and the other bird stands for the Parmatma or its pure conscious Atma which is a personification of the Supreme Being living inside its body representing the tree. Refer verse no. 5 also.]

Out of these two birds, one enjoys the fruits of the tree while the other just watches silently. [Here, the first bird which eats the fruit is the creature which enjoys the world and the fruits of its deeds and efforts, while the second bird is the Atma which just remains neutral and does not get involved in this enterprise.] (6).

[Note—The body is required by the Atma to live in this world. When this Atma displays the eclectic and sublime qualities of dispassion and non-involvement, of not finding charm in attractions of the material world, and instead maintaining stoic calmness of demeanors and stern neutrality, exercising self restraint which is tantamount to doing constant Tapa and Yoga (severe penance and meditation), it is deemed to be an incarnation of the Supreme Being (Brahm) residing in the body of the creature.

On the other hand, when the same consciousness begins to show carnal desires and allows itself to get dirty and corrupted by getting involved in the muck of the world, then it gets sucked in the swamp in which it had voluntarily jumped. This is the creature at his worst—worldly and entangled in its own web like the spider getting entangled in its own web. Refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 20.

The concept of two birds sitting on a tree has been also described in Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 41.]

7. Sitting on the same tree, the creature (literally ‘the Purush’ because the Viraat Purush representing the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm has revealed himself as the individual creature at the microcosmic level of creation; here represented by the *first bird*) who is overcome by delusions gets submerged in all types of miseries, sorrows and distresses, wailing and lamenting in the process¹.

This situation prevails only till the time the creature does not witness and experience the presence of the majestic glory and divinity of the supreme Lord whose mere presence dispels all causes of pains and miseries (much like the presence of sunlight automatically eliminates darkness of the night). This Lord, known as Ishwar, is served by countless spiritual seekers who focus their sight upon him by a variety of ways and try to reach him by so many paths. This Ishwar is distinct from the creature’s corrupt form (that is consequential to the creature’s ignorance and its attendant delusions, such as those that arise out of his association with this artificial world and its ensnaring sense objects). This Ishwar is not at all tarnished by any of the negativities and faults associated with the possession of a gross body as is the case with the ordinary mortal creature.

Once the creature is able to witness the presence of this benevolent Lord and understands the Lord’s majestic powers and overriding supremacy in this creation, when the creature knows that this almighty and most powerful Lord is there to give him his magnanimous protection and extend his helping hand to him so that the creature is able to overcome or get rid of all his numerous torments, miseries and agonies from which he had been suffering all along, he (the creature) feels reassured and rested that the Lord is not only able to deliver him from all his sufferings but would actually do so. It is then that the creature finds freedom from all sorrows, miseries and torments that have been overwhelming him due to ignorance about the omnipresence and omnipotence of this supreme Lord who is present literally at his own doorstep. [That is, the supreme Lord is very near the creature and not far away from him, for the Lord resides in the creature’s own heart, in his own bosom. It is like the paradoxical case of a man searching for the gold in the haystack while the gold is in his own breast pocket!] (7).

[Note—¹The ignorant creature thinks that it has a body and therefore all sorts of troubles that are associated with the body submerge it in their surging waves of delusions. The creature fears old age, diseases and death. It has enemies and friends; it has numerous attachments and as many hatreds; it has so many tasks unfulfilled and so many desires yet to realise; and so on and so forth. The result is that all its peace is snatched from it.]

8. It is in the infinite, fathomless and eternal sky or heaven that all the divine Gods are present; and it is this vast heaven that is also lauded in the Vedas. [This ‘sky’ is a metaphor for Brahm because the latter is also featureless, all-encompassing, all-pervading, omnipresent, taintless, vast, infinite, fathomless and eternal like the former.]

Those who do not understand the secret behind this can do nothing by reciting the hymns of the Vedas. [That is, it is most important to understand the secret behind the tenets and spiritual philosophy of the Vedas to benefit from them instead of mechanically repeating their hymns as if they would work miracles merely by staccato chanting. Nothing is further from the truth.]

On the other hand, those who understand that supreme eclectic and divine Being in a holistic way become fulfilled and accomplished (8).

9. All the Vedas, the various religious sacrifices and sacraments, all the different religious vows and duties, all that existed in the past, exists in the present and would exist in the future that are described in the Vedas (which are vast repositories of knowledge about these things)—all of them have been created by the maverick Supreme Being from one imperishable entity known as ‘Akchar’¹. [In other words, since Brahm is Akchar or one who is imperishable, it follows that the entire spectrum of creation, not only the entities mentioned here, has its origin in ‘Akchar’.]

This supreme entity (i.e. the Akchar Brahm), though it is distinct from everything else, being unique and matchless by all definitions and in all spheres, appears to be tied to this world of its own creation with the tag of Maya which attaches it to the latter² (9).

[Note--¹The word *Akchar* or *Akshar* means ‘one that does not perish’. Such an entity is ‘supreme’ because everything that exists has to perish according to the laws of Nature except this supreme entity known as Akchar. Since there is only one entity known as *Brahm* that is ‘supreme’ and ‘imperishable’, and which has the characteristics of the sky such as being ‘fathomless, eternal and infinite’ as well as being the ‘abode of everything in existence’, the Akchar from which the Vedas etc. have come into being is none other but Brahm himself.

Again, the word Akchar also means ‘a letter’. The ethereal word OM representing Brahm also consists of letters A, U and M. It is believed that this OM is the original sound from which the rest of creation has unfolded. Since the Vedas consists of hymns composed of ‘letters’ as the basic building blocks to form the words of those hymns, they represent this divine word OM.

Refer 5/6 and 6/18 in this context.

²*Maya* is the delusion creating powers of the supreme Brahm which keeps the world on it toes, hiding the reality and truth from it. Had it not been so, all the creatures would have become renunciate ascetics and then the wheel of creation would have come to a grinding halt. So when the supreme creator decided to create this world, he entered it to control it from within, and took up an abode as the Atma of the creature. But under the delusory spell purposely cast by Brahm, the creature could not see the reality much like one cannot see the reality when he is under the hypnotic spell of a magician or an expert hypnotist—the audience begins to eat out of the hand of the magician or hypnotist although it might be fully alert and wide awake. That is why Brahm appears to be involved in this world even though it is fundamentally non-attached and non-involved in anything that has to do with falsehoods and deceit just like the magician or a hypnotist who remains an active participant in the game of illusion-creation but himself is not under the illusions created because he knows that what is seen is not the actual thing but merely an illusion which he himself has created. A magician or a hypnotist is never swept off his feet by the illusion created for the audience.]

10. Prakriti¹ (primary Nature) should be treated as the Maya², and the supreme Lord called Maheshwar (one who is ‘Maha’—great, and ‘Ishwar’—Lord, of everything) as the maverick Lord who inspires and enables the Maya to not only create this world but also imprint it with its own characteristic qualities (much like the offspring bearing the characters and features, or genes, of the parent).

Thus, the entire creation bears the characteristic qualities and virtues so typical of and unique to Maya; these qualities and virtues form an integral character and nature of this creation as a whole as well as of all its individual units. [They are called the various Gunas³.] (10).

[Note—¹*Prakriti*—The word basically means ‘Nature’ with all its connotations. The Chambers dictionary defines it as the power that creates and regulates the world; the power of growth; the established order of things; the cosmos; the external world especially that untouched by man; the inherent qualities in anything that makes it what it is; the essence; the being; the constitution; a kind or order; naturalness; normal feeling; conformity to truth or reality; the inborn mind; the character, instinct or disposition; the vital power; the course of life; the nakedness of truth; the primitive undomesticated condition; the strength or substance of anything; a deity personifying some force of physical nature.

Sir Monier Monier-Williams, in his encyclopedic Sanskrit-English dictionary describes it thus—‘making or placing before or at first’.

The word *Prakriti* has many connotations, viz. the original or natural or basic form or condition of anything; the original or primary nature, character, condition, constitution, temperament, disposition; the fundamental form or shape or essence or pattern or standard or model, rule; Mother Nature which has the active physical natural forces that are responsible for unfolding the creation, its sustenance and annihilation; something that is inherent, innate, genuine, unaltered, unadulterated, basic, normal, bare, naked, crude, integral and stripped of all pretensions; the fundamental pattern, form, standard and model upon which the rest of the things are based; the crude or basic or root or seed form of any word, and by extension of anything expressed; that which decides the existential mode of anything; the coefficient, the multiplier of any fundamental element.

As inherent nature and temperament of a creature, it determines the way the world behaves and thinks; it determines the basic character of the creature and the creation as a whole because the individual creature is but a single unit of the creation.

The word *Prakriti* also refers to the ‘personified will of the Supreme Being in the creation’, and it therefore is synonymous with the powers of the Supreme Being personified as Mother Nature in whose womb the entire creation has revealed itself. It is deified forces of Nature and revealed as different renowned and powerful Goddesses.

The *Prakriti* represents the cosmic creative will of the creator that has revealed itself as the primary female aspect of creation which is known as ‘*Shakti*’, while its male aspect is known as the ‘*Viraat Purush*’. The *Shakti* is the active ingredient or force that creates and regulates everything, while the primary entity or Being whose will this *Shakti* is implementing is called *Brahm* who remains passive.

According to *Sankhya Shastra*, *Prakriti* is the original producer of the material world consisting of the three *Gunas* or fundamental qualities that are inherent in all the creatures and they decide the character and temperament of that creature depending upon the dominance of one quality over the other two. These three *Gunas* are—(i) ‘*Sata*’, or those which are auspicious and righteous and noble, (ii) ‘*Raja*’, or worldly qualities marked by such notions as having passions, desires, greed etc. and (iii) ‘*Tama*’, or those qualities that are ‘dark’ by nature, such as those that are categorised as sinful and pervert, leading to a creature’s moral downfall.

The word *Prakriti* refers to the following—(a) Mother Nature and (b) the natural habits, temperaments and inclinations of a person. The *Purush* is the male aspect while his female counterpart is the *Prakriti*. Since a man resides in this world, he is surrounded by Nature which casts its shadow upon him. All the maverick tricks that Mother Nature knows create an impression upon a man. He is enthralled and so overwhelmed by the deception created by Nature that he forgets about the falsehoods of what he sees, as well as about the truthful nature of his own pure self. He is deluded by false impressions so much so that they appear to be true to him. Consequentially, he drifts along in the swift

currents created by those delusions. He acquires the colours of Prakriti without realising the truth about its falsehood.

²*Maya*—Maya fundamentally means delusions that prevent a creature from knowing the reality and the truth of any thing whatsoever. Hence, Maya is a synonym used for all that is deceptive, faulty, false, deluding, ignorance based, illusionary, pretensions, deceitful, invisible and super-natural; all that which has no reality or substance; all that is hollow. It creates hallucinations in a creature's mind leading him to believe that what he sees is the truth. It is the deluding and magical powers of the supreme transcendental Lord that hides the reality and creates an imaginary world of deceptions and misconceptions

Maya has three basic constituent qualities. Hence it is called Triguṇmayi, i.e. one which has the three Guṇas or qualities. These three Guṇas or qualities are— Sata, Raja and Tama.

These three qualities together, in various permutations and combinations, decide the innate nature of a man. The greater presence of 'Sata' makes a man nobler as compared to a high ratio of 'Tama' which makes him wicked, pervert and evil. Various proportions of these qualities will therefore produce innumerable varieties of creatures having different temperaments, thought processes, behaviours, demeanors and mental setup in this world.

³As has been noted above, the three inherent qualities or Guṇas of Sata, Raja and Tama that characterize all the creatures of this creation are like the genes that the offspring carries of its parent. Through these Guṇas, the Maya resides in the bosom of all the creatures as their defining 'nature' and basic 'temperament'—called the *Prakriti* of the creature. Even as the supreme Brahm as the Great Lord called Maheshwar used his mystical deluding maverick powers to create this illusion of the world at the cosmic level and made it so perfect that it appears to be perfectly true, the same Brahm while residing in the bosom of the individual creature as its Atma also creates this world by using its delusion creating powers, and uses its man-Friday, the mind, to ensure that it is implemented to perfection.]

11. That supreme Lord is alone competent and capable of creating and establishing all the countless forms in which all the creatures of this creation are born in this world. It is in this supreme primary Lord in whom the entire creation dissolves or merges at the time of its end, only to be reborn from him once again at the time of the start of a new cycle of creation.

When the spiritual aspirant succeeds in his endeavour of seeking the ultimate Truth and getting acquainted with the supreme Authority of creation that is the overriding authority that controls everything in existence, that governs and regulates them, that can grant boons and blessings (because only an authority that can punish can also pardon, one who is all-powerful and authoritative can bless and give or grant boons or favours), and that is worthy of praise, honour, reverence and worship—it is only then that such an aspirant finds eternal peace and tranquility, eternal bliss and contentedness (11).

[Note—This is because he would have realised his 'own true self' in the fount of bliss and peace revealed in the form of his own pure conscious Atma. He would have realised that the external world in which he had so far been searching peace and happiness was actually a mirage and it was misleading him all through much like a trickster who uses all tricks in his trade to trap the gullible innocent prey, or like a magician or hypnotist who made his subject live in a world of make belief charm which is far removed from the harsh realities of this world.]

12. The great Lord Rudra (literally Lord Shiva who is also called Maheshwar or the Great God, but here referring to the supreme Brahm—refer 3/2-6) who is the cause of coming into being of all the Gods of creation and who endowed them with their divine powers, great authority and majestic glories¹, who is the unquestioned, unequivocal and the only supreme Lord of all that exists, who is all-knowing and omniscient, and who had watched the emergence of Hiranyagarbha²—let that supreme transcendental Being (Brahm, the Supreme Lord, the cosmic Consciousness) bless us with pure, auspicious and enlightened wisdom and intellect (12).

[Note—¹It is Brahm who has created the numerous Gods and then bestowed each one of them with their divine and glorious powers and authority which are astounding and most magnificent. These Gods are of two basic types—the *primary Gods* such as the Fire God, the Water God and the Wind God which are personifications of the original elements of creation and represent the dynamic forces of creation and the different fundamental life creating, sustaining, developing and concluding powers of Brahm. They also stand for the fundamental virtues and sublime but subtle qualities that are so characteristic of Brahm. The *secondary Gods* are the ones which followed once this creation came into being, when Brahm had to devise a mechanism to regulate his own creation and ensure its orderly functioning. Brahm had to lay down the detailed infrastructure and frame the constitution for his own creation lest it would just fall apart under its own weight of unregulated growth and uncontrolled propagation. This was a distinct possibility in the creator's mind—because the very origin of this creation was based on 'Maya' or deception which tended to hide the truth. Thus, the secondary Gods are primarily guardians or 'enforcing authorities' of the doctrines and principles of creation laid down by the Father of creation.

Naturally therefore, the Father Brahm 'had' to give these Gods necessary power and authority to implement and enforce his ordinances; he had to 'delegate his own powers' to a great extent to these Gods so that this vast and measureless realm could be controlled. In this scenario, Brahm retained the central command, interfering only when absolutely necessary, and having the final say in all matters just like the chief commander of an army or the Emperor of an extended empire. That is why even the Gods fear him.

Refer Canto 3, verse no. 4, and Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3, 16 of the present Upanishad also.

The various *directions and their patron Gods* have been described in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 3/1/9, 3/9/21-24.

According to the Purans, the twelve directions and their patron Gods are the following—(1) East—Indra; (2) South East—Fire God; (3) South—Yam God, the God of death and final judgment; (4) South West—Nairiti; (5) West—Varun, the Water God; (6) North West—Vayu, the Wind God; (7) North—Kuber, the God of treasure and wealth; (8) North East—Ishan, Lord Shiva; (9) Zenith—Brahma, the creator; (10) Nadir—Prithivi or earth; (11) Sun; and (12) Moon.

²*Hiranyagarbha* is the first sign of emergence of creation. It is the first embryo and, in terms of metaphysics, the subtle gross body of creation. Hiranyagarbha was the 'first born'. So if someone 'watched its emergence' it implies that this someone or some unknown entity existed even before Hiranyagarbha started to become a reality; this someone or something obviously pre-dated Hiranyagarbha. Now, it has also been said in verse no. 11 above that everything collapses into Brahm and merges into him at the time of conclusion of creation. Therefore it is very logical to say that this Brahm existed 'after the end of creation' and 'before the beginning of creation', i.e. in the intervening period.

This is possible because nothing can come into being from nothing; there must be something—however unknown, inconceivable, untraceable and incomprehensible—into which everything collapsed at the end and from which it was reborn. Had it been true that after the conclusion of any given creation there was a complete ‘nothing’ after it, then it would have been a ‘black hole’ type of thing, and modern science has established that even light cannot escape from this black hole, so there was no question of the next world ‘remerging’ from this ‘black hole of nothingness’.

This validly proves that there was indeed ‘some entity that was present and existent’ even after the conclusion of the last creation and before the beginning of the present creation.

The concept of Brahm watching the birth of the first-born in creation has also been stated in Canto 5, verse no. 2 of this Upanishad.]

13. He who is the supreme Lord and overriding Authority ruling over all the Gods in creation, in whom the entire creation has its foundation and basis, who is the regulator and controller of all the living beings in this world whether they are two-legged (such as humans) or four-legged (such as animals)—let us honour and worship that Supreme Being who is an embodiment of beatitude and felicity by paying tributes to him in the way of offerings of sweet rice pudding (or porridge) as sanctified food meant for the sacred fire (13).

14. He who is smaller than the minutest, who is hidden in the center of the Kalil¹ (i.e. who is surrounded by Avidya or the darkness of ignorance as is the case when Brahm voluntarily allowed himself to be surrounded by Maya or delusions, and Ahankar or ego and a false sense of pride, when he decided to forgo his neutral stature and indulge in the game of creation), who is the creator and progenitor of the entire creation², who assumes numerous forms because he pervades uniformly and universally in the entire creation (and therefore is deemed to exist in as many forms as there are types and classes of creatures in this creation), and who is most auspicious and a provider of well being to all—by being acquainted with this Lord, the spiritual aspirant finds eternal peace and tranquility as well as bliss and contentedness (14).

[Note—¹The word *Kalil* literally refers to the embryonic fluid formed by the fusion of the male semen with the female genital fluids. This results in the nascent embryo which is in the shape of a frothy bubble of viscous fluid. Since the embryonic fluid is lodged in the female womb, it is surrounded by pitch darkness. Further, this frothy fluid is the progenitor of the creation because it develops into a full blown creature. But its primary strength is derived from the sperm which fertilises the egg of the female which then undergoes rapid divisions and metamorphoses into an embryo. In the present context, Brahm is compared to this Kalil because Brahm is the cause of creation of this entire creation, including the ‘darkness of Avidya or ignorance’ with which Brahm allowed himself to be surrounded so that an excuse could be found for initiating the process of creation. The present version is according to the revered sage Adi Shankaracharya, the greatest exponent of Advaitya Vedanta and an unchallenged authority on the Upanishads. Others like Vigyan Bhagwan and Shankaranand endorse this view. According to Narayantirtha, the word Kalil refers to ‘Tamso Madhye’—i.e. to being in the center of darkness or ignorance called ‘Agyan’. Since Brahm was surrounded by negative factors of Ahankar and Maya when the process of creation rolled forward, this description also fits into place. In this interpretation, Brahm is an astonishing Being who even lives inside

something that is dark and foreboding, indicating that behind the darkness of ignorance and falsehoods there is hidden the real 'truth'.

²Refer 5/5, 6/1-3, 16 in this connection.]

15. It is he who is the protector of the entire creation in all time frames (past, present and future), is the unquestioned and unchallenged Lord of the whole world, and present in all the creatures uniformly and universally (as their Atma and Pran). It is he on whom all the learned and wise sages and seers as well as the different Gods remain focused by the way of meditation and contemplation. By becoming acquainted with or being Brahm-realised, a wise and enlightened spiritual aspirant is able to break free from the fetters of death, i.e. he is able to free himself from the causes that keep him tied to this cycle of birth and death¹ (15).

[Note—¹The cause of death is birth, because only one who is born would die. When the aspirant realises that his true self is Atma which is pure consciousness and Brahm personified, he also realises that the body is not the self he was previously thinking it to be. It is the body that dies and not the Atma because it is eternal and imperishable and therefore without a birth. So the basis of fear of death vanishes. Besides this, when he distances himself from the body and the deeds that are done by this body as well as the world in which these deeds are done, then also he does not have to take another birth as no after-effects of deeds remain, thereby eliminating the need to take another body to suffer or enjoy the results of those deeds.]

16. [This verse describes both the macrocosmic form of Brahm as well as its microcosmic subtle form.]

That eclectic, unique and divine Supreme Being is like the clarified butter floating on the surface of milk. This butter represents the best part of milk (or curd); it enriches the value of milk (or curd), and is much sought after by food connoisseurs. This supreme and divine Being of creation is therefore honoured and worshipped by the epithet 'Shiva'—one who is eternal, beautiful, holy, auspicious, truthful, best and most divine as well as an embodiment of infinite happiness and bliss.

This supreme Lord lives secretly inside all the creatures in a very subtle form as their atomic and invisible microcosmic Atma. At the same time, this same mystical Lord pervades the entire creation and encloses it from all sides in his vast colossus form as the Viraat Purush at the macrocosmic level. When the seeker comes to know this Supreme Being (or when he becomes Brahm-realised), he is freed from all the fetters that had been shackling him from time immemorial (16).

17. That all-pervading, all-permeating, all-incorporating and all-encompassing supreme Lord is the creator and progenitor of the entire creation. He resides subtly in the heart of all the creatures (as their Atma). He is known, and the truth about him realised, by coordination between a sincere and dedicated heart, an enlightened mind, and a wise intellect. When this supreme transcendental Divinity is brought to light by this method, the seeker becomes immortal (because he would have realised that his own true self is none other but this supreme Brahm residing in his heart as his pure conscious and enlightened Atma which is his essential spirit or soul) (17).

18. When the darkness of ignorance is dispelled, there is no such notion as day or night, or of something being true and something being false¹. In other words, there is no sense of duality and confusions. When the light of enlightenment and wisdom dawns on the spiritual horizon of the wise self-realised seeker, there is only the existence of one and non-dual Truth, which is the eternal, auspicious and universal supreme Lord.

This supreme, eternal and imperishable Lord is even the object of worship by the Sun God. It is from this Lord and the supreme Authority of creation that ancient wisdom and erudition came into being and was propagated (in the form of holy scriptures and enlightened preachers) (18).

[Note--¹This is because when there is only *one state of existence*, i.e. when there is only 'truth' prevailing, and therefore there is no sense of duality and cause of any confusion and doubt, it does not matter whether one lives in sunshine or darkness of the night, he would have no sense of fear from any quarter. For example, for a man in sleep or one who is confined to a closed room, it does not matter to him whether it is day or night outside.

This 'day' and 'night' are relative terms because, as everyone knows, if one part of the earth has day, the other part has night. It is not that 'day' completely eliminates 'night' from the surface of the earth; they have a cyclic occurrence. Suppose one believes that the day is the truth and night is not the truth, then what would happen when night falls, something which is bound to happen and simply cannot be wished away. So, if one is made to believe that the 'day' is the only truth, then when night comes and day sets, he would be completely confounded because 'truth', which for him is represented by day time, cannot be expected to set as 'truth' is everlasting. But the fact that it does is irreconcilable for him; he would not be able to comprehend how the 'truth' comes to an end.

Similarly, what appears to be 'truth' now becomes 'false' at some other moment, and vice versa. For example, the 'day light' now becomes false during night time. The existence of the creature now becomes false once he is dead. But since he takes a new birth, he is actually not dead, but only changed his body and form.]

19. This Supreme Being cannot be caught or understood from the above, from the sides, or from the middle. He whose name has the epithet 'Mahadyaash'—one who is the greatest and most magnificent, one who is grand and majestic, one who is astounding and stupendous, one who is the most exalted and superior to all others—indeed has no match because he is unique and peerless. There is verily nothing with which he can be compared, or that which can be compared with him (19).

20. The divine and esoteric form of this Supreme Being is not the subject matter for the perception of sight, therefore the physical eyes of the body cannot see him. A self-realised and enlightened seeker who can perceive this Supreme Being in his own heart with the aid of uncorrupt and wisened mind that can penetrate deep into the realm of the subtle truth (with meditation and contemplation) is able to actually become immortal (because the Atma is immortal, and the Atma is his true self as well as the personification of Brahm inside his body) (20).

[Note—When a wise and self-realised man is able to see deep inside his own self, he realises that 'he' is the Atma and not the body as he had been thinking till now. This

Atma is immortal, eternal and imperishable—and therefore ‘he’ is also immortal, eternal and imperishable!]

21. Oh Lord Rudra! Since you have no beginning (i.e. you do not die to take a birth again as you are eternal, imperishable and infinite—because you are Brahm personified), someone who is afraid of death, or someone who is scared of this world and its horrors, seeks your shelter and refuge, or seeks your protection. [This is because only one who is immortal himself can know how to become immortal and advise others on the subject. Such holy souls as you are definitely divine and holy and worthy of seeking shelter with. They are also powerful and potent enough to give protection to their wards who seek their intercession, their refuge and blessings.]

Such scared person pleads with you to protect him with your face which faces South¹, which is a metaphor for your benevolent, compassionate, kind and favourable inclinations towards those who are meek and seek your protection (21).

[Note—¹There is an Upanishad called Dakshin Mukhi Upanishad which describes this South facing form of Lord Shiva along with its metaphysical importance and significance.]

22. Oh Rudra! You are requested not to destroy (kill; eliminate; exterminate; or subject to torments and miseries) any of our sons, grand-sons, our age and life (i.e. let us not die pre-maturely), cows and cattle as well as horses and other domesticated animals. You are also requested not to harm our loyal brave servants and subordinates. We always show our greatest of respect to you; we duly worship and adore you, and offer sweet puddings to you as offering in the sacred fire during religious sacrifices. [Refer Canto 3, verse no. 6.] (22).

Canto 5, verse no. 5

5. [This verse outlines the genesis of creation.]

That supreme Lord is the cause of coming into being of the entire creation, starting from the basic or fundamental five elements¹. He then determines the basic nature and character, the fundamental qualities, virtues and attributes of not only these elements but also of the produce which results from the conjunction of these elements in various permutations and combinations².

He assigns the Gunas (the inherent fundamental qualities present in all the creatures of this creation; the qualities that determine the character, nature and temperament of these creatures) with their designated functions vis-à-vis the world³.

Once the final product (the creation) is ready, the Supreme Being then regulates and rules over it as its supreme regulator and unquestioned Authority.

This supreme Lord is called Brahm (5).

[Note—¹The fundamental *five elements* of creation are usually regarded as the following—(a) sky/space, air/wind, fire/energy, water and earth. Other connotations are the following—(b) the *five sheaths*—‘Annamaye Kosh’ or the food sheath, ‘Pranmaye Kosh’ or the vital wind sheath, ‘Manomaye Kosh’ or the mental sheath, ‘Vigyanmaye

Kosh' or the intellect sheath, and 'Anandmaye Kosh' or the bliss sheath; and (c) the *five vital winds*—Pran, Apaana, Vyan, Samaana and Udaana.

These are the basic subtle forms in which the living world came into being. What is visibly seen externally basically consist of these five elements. That is, the five elements listed under (a) were the basic bricks of this creation. They were used in different ratios to create the body of the creature consisting of the five sheaths mentioned in (b). And finally, this body is controlled by vital winds outlined in (c).

²In other words, the supreme creator moulds this creation out of these elements and gives it myriads of forms; he crafts such an astonishing variety of creation just from these limited raw materials and then delineates them into millions of species and numerous groups that have no resemblance with their other brethrens or even their own siblings. And therein lie his astounding abilities and stupendous creative powers.

³There are three basic *Gun*as or qualities that determine the nature and inclination of each individual creature of this creation. Briefly, they are:--(a) 'Sata' or noble qualities leading to higher values in life. This quality creates an inherent affinity in a creature towards things in life which are of high moral value and uplifting for the soul rather than things which are demoting and denigrating for the spirit. (b) Raja or mediocre qualities that are run-of-the-mill qualities that dominate the majority of worldly creatures. In other words, those creatures who have this quality as a dominant trait are more inclined towards the world as compared to those creatures who have the Sata quality in a greater density. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. (c) Tama which is the meanest of the three qualities leading to the propensity to commit sins. This quality creates an inherent affinity in a creature towards things which are very mean and lowly, which are totally sensual and pertain to the immediate gratification of the sense urges without any thought to what would be their consequences in the long run. In brief, behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraving for the creature, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness of demeanors. It is the lowest and meanest of the three qualities leading to a person's downfall, ignominy and ruin.

Since each individual is like an independent piece of mosaic that completes the entire picture in conjunction with other such pieces, this individual creature's nature and character helps to determine the overall shape of the creation. These *Gun*as keep the creation in a state of constant change, because numerous creatures die every moment and new ones are born. The Supreme Being has to be constantly on the alert because of this flux.

'Brahm is the cause of creation'—this universal truth has been repeatedly said in this Upanishad and it forms the basis of the Sankhya philosophy of creation given in Canto 6, verse no. 1-3 and 16, as well as at number other places, for example 4/12, 14.]

Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3

1. [Verse nos. 1-3 describe the grand cycle of this creation called *Brahm-Chakra* or the wheel of creation. This wheel has been elaborately described in Canto 1, verse no. 4 and 6 as well of this Upanishad.]

Some wise men regard the 'Swabhaav', or the inherent and basic nature and temperament of a creature as the reason for it falling into the seemingly endless cycle of birth (and death) called the 'Brahm-Chakra' or the cycle of creation set in motion by the supreme Brahm. Others regard 'Kaal', or time, age, period and circumstance as the reason. But such people are wide off the mark; none of these are the reasons for the

turning of the wheel of creation (though they are contributory factors and themselves created by some supernatural Authority in order to keep the wheel in motion).

Actually, it is the magnificent potentials and divine abilities, the supernatural powers and overriding authority of the supreme Lord (Brahm) that does it (rotates this awesome and vast wheel of creation), and it is a measure of this Lord's stupendous majesty, his astounding greatness and splendorous glory (that the wheel goes on rotating on its own until the Lord himself decides to stop it) (1).

2. He who pervades uniformly throughout this whole creation, surrounding it from all the sides, he who is an embodiment of Gyan (knowledge and wisdom, erudition and enlightenment), he who is the authority that even rules over Kaal (time, age, period and circumstance), he who possesses all the qualities and virtues present in this creation, and who is all-knowing and omniscient—verily, this Brahm-Chakra is turning under his command and authority, following the laws and principles laid down by him.

Even the symbolic wheel consisting of the five fundamental elements of creation, viz. sky, air, fire, water and earth, which are the basic building blocks of life, is also in his hands. (One should be convinced of this eternal irrefutable truth.) (2).

[Note—Refer to Canto 1, verse nos. 4 and 6 that describe the Brahm Chakra in detail. There is another interpretation of the word *Chakra*. The word 'Chakra' refers to the subtle energy centers present inside the body. According to Yoga texts, when the vital dynamic energy trapped in these Chakras are activated, a person acquires immense potentials, including spiritual and mystical powers. In brief, the Chakras and their location and shape are the following— (i) 'Bhug' or 'Brahm Chakra' is triangular in shape and represents the female genital organ; (ii) The 'Mool Kanda' (literally the edible root, tuber root, e.g. radish) is present near the anus, has the shape of a lotus with 4-petals. It is also called 'Kaam' because it is the seat of passion and lust; (iii) The 'Mooladhar Chakra' is located between genitals and anus; (iv) The 'Swadhisthan Chakra' is located in the groins of males and the Bhug area of females. It has a 5-headed male phallus like a sprouting seed and its counterpart in the female is the clitoris; The Chakras 1-4 are related to the sexual reproduction cycle marking the creation of the world. Hence are called 'Kaam' (lust, passion, desire), and are associated with the fire element; (v) The 'Kundalini' is located between the navel and Swadhisthan Chakra in the upper part of the Moolkand, and it is coil shaped having three and a half loops. Its one end blocks the entrance to the Sushumna nerve (Naadi) rising from the base of the spine and going right up to the head. Therefore, we conclude that Kundalini lies dormant at the base of the spine; (vi) The 'Manipur Chakra' is located in the navel area, is shaped like a gem and is surrounded by the network of Naadis (nerves) called solar plexus. It is also the site of the Sun energy; (vii) The 'Anahat Chakra' is located in the chest between the heart and lung area and it is shaped like a swan looking downwards. It is also assumed to be like a 8-petal lotus facing down; (viii) The 'Vishuddha Chakra/Kanth Chakra' is located in the throat. To the left of it passes the Eda nerve representing the moon, to its right goes the Pingla nerve representing the sun, and in the center is the Sushumna nerve through which the Kundalini energy rises up from the base of the spine to the skull; (ix) The 'Talu Chakra' also called Rajdant. It is the route to the 10th door of Brahm. It is located in the palate (back of the mouth); (x) The 'Agya Charka or Bhru Chakra' is located between the eyebrows and root of the nose. It is also called the third eye of enlightenment and wisdom; (xi) The 'Brahm Rahandra Chakra or Sahasraar Charka' is located in the forehead and has the form of a grey cloud or smoke. 'Brahm Randhra' has two

connotations— (a) it means ‘an opening of fistula’, (b) the hair-like spilt in the top of the skull from where the vital wind called ‘Pran’ makes its exit from the body of a Yogi (ascetic) at the time of his death. For the purpose of Vedanta, the latter is regarded as the ‘Brahm Randhra’ while for practices of meditation in the initial stages when the ‘Apaan Vayu’ is required to be diverted from the lower intestine into the ‘Kundalini’, the former definition of ‘Brahm Randhra’ is referred to; (xii) The ‘Vyom Chakra’ is symbolic of the sky and it is shaped like a 10-petal lotus located at the top of the head.]

3. That supreme creator (Brahm) did the ‘deed’ of creating this Brahm-Chakra and then set it in motion. He watched it move, and then created a circumstance whereby the subtle conjoined the gross to result in the unfolding of this vast world. [That is why this world consists of two types of attributes or qualities—one which come under the category of subtle, and the other that come under the category of gross.]

In other words, the supreme creator first revealed his own characteristic ‘Self’ in the form of the pure consciousness called the cosmic Atma which was very subtle. Then he went on progressively making it grosser and grosser by slow degrees, in a step-by-step method. Thus he created the many elements. Then he mixed them in various permutations and combinations to produce newer, more varied, and extremely fascinating array of products which become heavier by degrees and then finally resulted in the structure which we call ‘creation’ and which is still evolving.

Therefore, it all started from one element (Avidya—lack of truthfulness, substance and pith in what is being created, as all the creation that was created as a result of this endeavour of the creator was a mirage and not the reality), and this was followed by a chain reaction, progressively producing two elements (Dharma—righteousness, probity and propriety + Adharma—the opposite of Dharma), three elements (the three basic qualities of Sata—the high moral quality of spiritualism + Raja—the mediocre quality of worldly passions etc. + Tama—the meanest quality of sinfulness), four elements (Prakriti—nature + Mana—mind + Buddhi—intellect + and Ahankar—pride and vanity), five elements (the five Prans which are the vital winds—Pran, Apaana, Vyan, Samaan and Udaan; it also refers to the five sense perceptions—sight, hearing, smell, taste and feeling), six elements (the five perceptions + Mana or mind, because it is the mind that brings effectively coordinates these five perceptions), seven elements (five perceptions + Mana or mind + Buddhi or intelligence), and eight elements (the five basic elements—sky, air, fire, water and earth + Mana or mind + Buddhi or intellect + Ahankar or pride and vanity).

The supreme creator mixed his own divine and eclectic qualities with the gross characteristics of Kaal (time, age, period and circumstance) and the subtle qualities of the inner self (such as having compassion, mercy, benevolence and magnanimity as well as desires, wishes, aspirations, hopes and expectations) to create this world. [That is why this world exhibits these basic characters because they all have been incorporated in its structure by the creator.]

The entire gross creation came into being out of this concoction.

Since this wheel came into being as a result of some deed done by this supreme creator, it was also called the ‘Karma Chakra’¹. The creator, having thus created this wheel out of the subtlest of elements and the grossest of elements, watched fascinatingly as it rotated (3).

[Note—¹The cycle of deeds, their consequences, and newer deeds and their fresh consequences is called the *Karma Chakra* or the ‘Wheel of Deeds’. This cycle is referred to as a ‘wheel’ because it rotates around the central axle consisting of the notion of ‘deed’ done by the creature, and therefore this wheel has its existence only till the time the creature ‘does the deeds’. As soon as the creature stops doing any deed, the wheel is dismantled because the axle breaks. But this ideal scenario is always not possible as a creature has to do one or the other deed when he lives in this world, and he cannot escape the consequences of these deeds done by him, which in turn make him do other deeds as a follow up action, and these new deeds set in motion their own set of consequences, and so the wheel goes on rotating on and on. In other words, the creature gets shackled to the wheel of deeds just like the bull or the ox that turns the water-wheel for its master throughout its life but cannot get done with it. The bull or ox dies turning the water-wheel but even after its death the wheel goes on turning, albeit some other unfortunate animals is yoked to it.

Now, the question is ‘how to stop this Wheel of Deeds even while living in this world’? The answer lies in the truthful knowledge of the self, which is the Atma, and the fact that it is the true self of the creature and that it is very distinct and independent from the body which is the entity that actually and physically does the deed. Once this delineation becomes obvious—and this is only possible by studying the Upanishads and intelligently understanding their fundamental tenets and doctrines in the correct perspective—the creature endeavours to distance himself from the deeds done by the body. This attitude removes the *basic cause of all the problems*, and leads to the breaking of the vicious cycle known as Karma Chakra, there by setting the creature free from his bondage.

There is another option which is described in the next verse no. 4.]

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5. (d) The Taittiriya Upanishad:--

(Valli 1, Anuvak 7; Valli 2, Anuvak 1-2 and 7)

Valli 1, Anuvak 7

[There are ‘five’ principle elements in creation, and this fundamental aspect is reflected in the appearance of five consecutive layers or rows in which all the units of creation, both at the micro level as well as the macro level, have arranged themselves. They form a series in such a way that one layer or row depends upon the other; they compliment and supplement each other. These rows or layers are called ‘Panch Pankta’—the consecutive layers or rows or strata or tier of creation each having five units in it. They together form a grid that constitutes this enigmatically mysterious but astoundingly magnificent creation. This verse endeavours to list the various units of creation and classify them into distinct layers or rows or sequences or tiers or groups to establish that there is an underlying force which unites them together into one composite mass called the ‘living world’. It is like a colourful picture made up of a mosaic of multi-coloured units put together by the supreme creator.]

1. The five units that constitute the first layer or tier or row or sequence of the visible creation consists of the Earth, the Sky, the Heavens, the Directions (north, east, south, west, zenith and nadir), and the Corners (north-east, north-west, south-east and south-west)¹. [This is the Lok Pankti—the layer or row of units that give physical shape and dimension to the known creation.]

The second layer or row or sequence of the creation consists of the following five units—Fire, Wind or Air, the Sun, the Moon and the Stars². [This is the Jyoti Pankti—the layer that constitutes the units of creation that give light and illumination.]

The third layer or row or sequence of five units of this creation consists of Water, Medicinal herbs (special plants), Vegetation (plants in general), the vast Sky (the space in which everything created finds place to exist), and the Atma (i.e. the pure consciousness that lives in this world constituting of these fundamental units)³. [This is the Adhibhautik Pankti—the layer that constitutes the units of creation that forms the gross aspects of the physical world.]

Now that aspect of the creation that enables the Atma, the pure consciousness to physically live and get the feel of the world at the personal level is being outlined. This aspect of creation is called ‘Adhyatma’—because it relates to the Atma and how it interacts with the physical world where the consciousness lives in the gross body of the creature.

The fourth layer or row or sequence of five units in this series of creation at the individual level of the creature where his Atma lives in the gross body are the different forms of the vital winds or airs. These five winds or airs are known as Pran, Vyan, Apaana, Udaana and Samaan present in the body of the individual creature⁴. [This is called the Panch Pran Pankti—the row or sequence of five vital winds that sustain life in the creature’s body.]

The fifth layer or row or sequence of five fundamental units in this world constitute of the eye (which help the Atma to see), the ear (which help the Atma to hear), Mana (mind—which help the Atma to perceive this world and get attracted to it), Vaak (literally meaning speech or the spoken word or voice—but here referring to the tongue through which the creature speaks) and skin (which helps the creature to feel and touch anything). [This is the Indriya Pankti—the layer that constitutes the organs of the body—called the Indriya—that helps the individual creature to conceive and then perceive the world. This is because the world is a conception of the Mana or mind which plays an important role in the creation of the world as it is the mind which imagines the presence of the gross physical world first and then impels the creature to believe in its existence. The other sense organs listed here—viz. the eye, the ear, the tongue and the skin then play their individual role to make this imaginary world appear to be for real and concrete. Should the mind decide that it has nothing to do with the world, the latter loses all its relevance and significance.]⁵.

The sixth layer or row or sequence of five units that are used in the structuring of the physical world where the Atma lives constitutes of the five gross parts that form the physical body of the creature—viz. the skin, the flesh, the veins/nerves, the bones and the marrow⁶. [This is the Dhatu Pankti—the layer of basic elements or units that constitutes the gross body of the creature where his Atma, his pure consciousness and the true ‘self’ lives. For the Atma, the body is the world inasmuch as the fact that without the body the

Atma would have no place to live in this creation. The individual's body has the same relevance to the Atma as the vast sky or the space of the cosmos has for the huge array of cosmic bodies such as the sun, the moon, the stars and other heavenly bodies that inhabit this vast, infinite and measureless creation at the macrocosmic level.]

Having enumerated these vital statistics, the sage said, 'All these are like the consecutive rings or lines that are linked together in a grid to form a composite picture of the creation⁷. [They are like the steps of the ladder without which the structure known as the 'ladder' will have no meaning. Without the ladder it is impossible to reach the top of a shelf or the high point of structure. This is a metaphoric way to enlighten the budding student to become aware of the highly structured manner in which this creation exists. This is a scientific method to explain to him the vast map or plan of things that the supreme the cosmic creator had as his master-plan when he set about on the venture of creation. On the metaphysical plane, this scheme is intended to make a wise aspirant understand that proper knowledge of all the individual units of creation are needed to complete the journey to Brahm realisation⁸.] (1).

[Note--¹This is known as the *Loka Pankti* which means the five layers of the known world where all forms of mortal beings live. The word *Pankti* literally means a line or row or sequence. The earth and the sky and their various directions are the natural habitat of all life forms in this creation, because nothing living exists beyond this periphery. The heaven is also included in it because even after reaching the heaven, the creature has to come back to the earth once the good effects of the past deeds done by it are exhausted. Going to heaven is not the final emancipation and salvation of the soul as this is only a temporary habitat to enjoy the excellent rewards of an exemplary life led by the creature in its previous life. This oscillating path has been described in Chandogya Upanishad, 5/3-5/10, and Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 4/4, 5/10, 6/2.]

²This is known as the *Deva Pankti* or *Jyoti Panti* series of individual units in creation. It consists of the five strata in which divine cosmic bodies representing the different forces of Nature exist. These forces are called 'Gods' to emphasis their divinity and the fact that they exercise control over the rest of the units or layers of creation. Since the cosmic bodies such as the sun, the moon and the stars shine and emanate light, they are referred to as 'Jyoti' which means light and illumination. Such entities provide light and energy to this creation. Therefore, they are categorised as belonging to the light and energy facet of creation. The Gods belong to this category because they are more spiritually empowered than ordinary creatures and a halo of divinity exudes from their being.

³This is known as the *Adhi Bhut* or *Adhi Bhautik* facet of existence. It pertains to the physical world and the body of the creature, and matters related to them. Water is the chief constituent of the body of all creatures; medicines and plants are equally necessary and vital for the existence of all the creatures that have a body. Space is an essential requirement for the development and growth of all the living creatures because they would be stifled to death if adequate space is not available for them to go grow both physically and mentally. Nothing can grow and achieve enhancement in the absence of sufficient space for this purpose. This is evident from the fact that plants, for example, that grow out in the open space of the forest or garden achieve greater degree of development as compared to those which are placed indoors. Since consciousness or Atma is the vital factor in the body of any organism, it is as integral to the living body of any creature as is water. This aspect of creation is related to the physical body of the creature that bears the Atma in it.

⁴These *vital winds or airs* enable the otherwise inane, lifeless, worthless and gross body to become alive, active and worthy to become the habitat of the immaculate and pure conscious Atma or soul, which is in turn a microcosmic form of the macrocosmic supreme transcendental Brahm who is the ultimate Lord of creation. Had there been no vital wind in the body, the latter would have shown no signs of life, and therefore Brahm could not possibly live in it, as Brahm and its microcosmic counterpart the Atma are synonymous with 'life' and 'consciousness' and not of death and gloom which a body without any movement and signs of life resembles.

This series of vital winds or airs is called the *Vayu Pankti* or the row of various winds or airs that form one of the different aspects or pillars of creation.

Now let us see what these five 'vital winds or air' are. The *Vital Winds/Pran*—Dictionary defines *Pran* as breath, inhaled and exhaled wind, the breath of life, life itself, one of the five vital winds or airs that sustain life, strength, valour, courage, energy, vitality, vigour. It is also synonymous with the fire element as well as with the supreme soul or Atma. It is the 'fire element' because both the fire as well as the Pran inject and infuse life into the otherwise lifeless and inane gross body of a creature, enabling it to get up and perform its functions and carry on with its activities. A dead body from which 'life' has exited becomes cold and lifeless, thereby indicating that the fire element that is inherently present in it has been extinguished—we then declare that the man is dead.

Though technically Atma or soul is pure consciousness while Pran is a vital wind or air element, practically they are synonymous with each other. An illustration will clear this point. Suppose a man has lost senses in his limbs—they have been paralysed, or he is lying unconsciousness due to some serious disease. We regard such a man as alive and not as dead as long as he continues to breathe, and as long as he breathes, or as long as he is technically 'alive' his Atma is deemed to be inside his body, because the true identity or the true self of a man is not his physical body but his Atma. Therefore we do not regard the 'unconscious' body as dead. But when he actually dies, that is, when he stops to breathe, we say that 'his Pran' has left the body, and that 'he' has died. Now, who has died? It is the person whose Pran has left the body; and the person is the 'self' or the Atma which has left the body when the Pran made its exit from it at the time of death. This is because Pran and Atma depend on each other so much so that as soon as the Pran leaves the body, the Atma also leaves the body and we say that the person is no more. Why do we say that the 'person is no more' when the body is actually lying in front of us? It is because the 'person' is the Atma and not the body, and this Atma has left the body with the Pran at the time of death. When the proper time comes, the Atma leaves the body astride the Pran, riding piggy back on it.

Besides the chief meaning of Pran as breath which injects the vital spark of life in a body to keep it alive and active, thereby providing it with the necessary impetus, the energy, vitality and strength to perform its designated functions and duties as a living entity, there are other vital winds or airs that are also categorised as Pran because they work in tandem with each other to enable the main Pran, the breath, to actually carry out its function. These vital winds do not exist in separate so-called water tight compartments, as this is an incredulous proposition because air is an element that cannot be compartmentalized into separate entities having distinct existences, but they are named as separate winds just for the academic purpose of studying the way the vital wind or air functions differently in the body to enable it to carry on with its functions. So these other 'Prans' or vital winds besides the breath, both inhaled and exhaled, are the following—Apaan, Vyan, Udaan and Samaan.

However, the term 'Pran' is usually applied to breath because it is the vital wind force that injects and sustains life and vitality in a creature. It is synonymous with life, Atma and soul of a living creature. The presence of Pran determines whether a creature is

dead or alive; it is a distinguishing factor between the animate and inanimate world. Pran is the essential vibrations of life; it is the rhythm of life; it is the essential characteristic that defines life.

The inherent tendency of the Pran, which is the vital wind residing in the upper part of the body between the heart-lungs and the nose, is to lift the creature to a higher state of noble, righteous, virtuous, auspicious and spiritual existence, to become wise and enlightened. On the contrary, the Apan winds live in the intestine and pass down through the anus. It symbolises the downward drag on the creature's spiritual upliftment, pulling it down towards the grosser aspects of creation and the materialistic world which is not only gross but also filthy and worthless like the excretory matters present in the intestine. It also symbolises passions, evils, vices, perversion and attachments to the worldly things at large, and their accompanying perplexities, bewilderments and hassles leading to restlessness and moral turpitude and degradation. This oscillation between the spiritual upliftment and moving upwards towards goodness, and spiritual degradation, moving downwards towards the gross world of sensual pleasures, leads a creature to a continuous cycle of birth and death—this oscillation is like the bouncing of a ball upwards and downwards from the surface of the earth. One must remember that a lot of symbolism, metaphors and allegories have been used in the Upanishadic texts to explain things. One should be wise not to lose the spirit while getting bogged down by the literal meaning of the words; one should not lose the wood while searching for the tree. The 'Pran' wind here symbolises the upward drift which the pure consciousness is inherently inclined to, while the 'Apan' winds pull it down towards the attractions of the world. The creature remains trapped between the two forces.

This 'vital wind' called Pran is one of the five elements of creation, called the Panch Bhuts, the others being earth, water, fire and sky.

According to various Upanishads, especially the Trishiki Brahmin Upanishad, 1/5 and 2/77-87, as well as Paingalo-panishad, cantos 2, verse nos.3 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, this vital wind is of ten types depending upon the function that the wind element performs in the body of a creature. Amongst them, there are five winds which are considered more important than the rest. As such, these five are called the main 'Pran', or 'Panch Prans', and they are the following—(1) *Pran*, the wind element, as breath, that is exhaled as well as inhaled, and which is responsible for infusing and sustaining life in the body; it is considered the chief wind in the whole setup because without life no other wind would be of any significance to the creature; (2) *Apan*, the wind that passes down the intestines and is responsible for digestion of the food taken by the creature and its excretion through the anus and urinary organs (kidneys); (3) *Samaan*, the wind that is responsible for equal distribution of nourishment throughout the body, as well as in circulation of blood; (4) *Udaan*, the wind that helps the body to rise and move about, it also helps the body to expel toxic waste gases in the body through the nostrils and mouth in the form of exhalation and cough; and (5) *Vyan*, the wind that helps in maintaining equilibrium and pressure within the body, and it also controls the functioning of the other winds.

Besides the above, there are five subsidiary winds which act more like assistants to the chief Prans. They are—(1) *Naag*—this junior wind which helps in exhaling breath and belching; (2) *Kurma*—this subsidiary wind helps the eyelids to open and shut; (3) *Krikar*—this creates the sensation of hunger; (4) *Devdutta*—this creates sleep; and (5) *Dhananjay*—it prevents decay and deformation of the body immediately after death for some time.

According to Subalo Upanishad, canto 9, verse no.1-14 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, these ten winds have the following functions—(1) *Pran*—this controls eyes and the faculty of sight (verse 1); (2) *Apan*—this controls ears and the faculty of hearing

(verse 2); (3) Vyan—this controls nose and the faculty of smell (verse 3); (4) Udaan—this controls the tongue and the faculty of taste (verse 4); (5) Samaan—this controls the skin and the faculty of touch (verse 5); (6) Vairambh—this controls speech (verse 6); (7) Mukhya—this controls the hands (verse 7); (8) Antarayaam—this controls the legs (verse 8); (9) Prabhanjan—this controls the anus (verse 9); (10) Kurma—this controls the genitals (verse 10); (11) Shyen—this controls the Mana or the thoughts and emotions (verse 11); (12) Krishna—this controls the discrimination, intellect and wisdom (verse 12); (13) Shwet—this controls Ahankar or the notion of ego, pride, arrogance, vanity etc. (verse 13); (14) Naag—this controls the ‘Chitta’ or the faculty of concentration, memory, sub-conscious, reasoning (verse 14).

Location of the five chief vital winds, called the Panch Prans, in the body—(1) Pran—it is present in the mouth, nose, heart, navel, big toe of the leg; (2) Apaana—it is present in the intestines and anus, lower abdomen, thighs, knees; (3) Saman—it is uniformly present throughout the body; (4) Udaan—it is present in the hands, legs, joints of the body; and (5) Vyan—it is located in the ears, thighs, waist, heels, shoulders, throat. The subsidiary winds as listed above, i.e. Naag, Kurma, Krikar, Devdutta and Dhananjay are located in the skin, muscles and the bones.

Besides the Upanishad mentioned above, there are others that elaborately describe the vital winds, their locations, their functions and their significance, and the chief amongst them are (1) Chandogya Upanishad in its canto 3, sections 13-18, and canto 7, section 15, (2) Jabal Darshan Upanishad, canto 4, verse no.23-24 of the Sam Veda tradition, (3) Maitrayanu Upanishad, canto 2, verse no.7 of the same Veda (which describes the functions of these winds), (4) Subalo Upanishad, canto 9, verse no.1-14, and (5) Paingalo-panishad, canto 2, verse no.3 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. These vital winds have also been elucidated upon in sage Veda Vyas’ Adhyatma Ramayan, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse no.38-39.

The Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 3, Brahman 9, verse no. 26 clearly lays down the pyramidal structure of the five important vital winds. It says that Pran depends and rests upon the Apaana wind, the latter upon the Vyan wind, the latter upon the Udaan wind, and the latter upon the Samaan wind although all the Prans are equally important, and there is no distinction between the one and the other as to their importance as well as to the extent Brahm is present in them. We cannot start the counting from any particular entity, saying for example that the Pran wind is number one and more important than the other vital winds. In the present context, this structure is only to show that even in the realm of metaphysics, a hierarchy is maintained, and at the apex of this hierarchical triangle is the supreme entity from which the various vital winds derive their authority and powers and potentials. That supreme entity at the micro level is the Atma as a representative of Brahm who is the supreme authority at the macro level.

Pran is evidently ‘air or the wind element’ because breath is air or wind, and ‘Pran’ is synonymous with breath. Stop the breath of a man, and he dies. Now as we know, a ‘fire needs air to keep burning’. If the speech is likened to the fire, it needs the Pran in the form of wind to keep it alive by being fed with its life sustaining force. The ‘wind’, which is a forceful expression of the powers of ‘air’, is strong enough to blow away trees and even topple ships on the high seas as is evident during severe storms. Hence, the wind, as Pran, empowers a man to do tremendously difficult tasks requiring strength, stamina, vitality and power. Pran is synonymous with breath or fresh air. At the time of creation, the Wind-God took up residence in the nostril of a man. Worship of Pran is the Adhyatmic form of worship of Brahm, while that of the air or wind is the Adhidaivic form respectively—Aeitereyo-panishad, 1/2/4. The heart is divided into five hypothetical sections and said to have five valves or apertures called Sushi (सुषुप्तिः). These are regarded

as the ‘holes or doorways’ through which the Pran can enter or escape the respective abodes of the Gods towards whom that particular doorways leads.

The 1st of these five is the valve opening in the ‘eastern direction’ of the heart through which the Pran enters it. The eyes are the apparatus by which the light of the world, both physical as well as metaphorical light of wisdom, enlightenment, knowledge and erudition enter the perception centers of the mind. The world, no matter how beautiful and illuminated, will be in dark if a person does not have the eye. The Sun or Aditya symbolically resides in the eye as its patron God, or as its torch, because it illuminates the realm which the eye is able to see, for the eye cannot see in darkness. The common coefficient in both the cases (i.e. the eye and the sun) is ‘light and illumination’. The sun is radiant, brilliant and splendidous with Tej (energy, radiance, splendour and glory). So this factor ‘Tej’ is the essence and life of the sun even as ‘Pran’ is the essence and life of a creature. If the sun had no ‘Tej’ in it, it would be worthless. Food obviously provides the basic nourishment and energy to the creature. What will the eyes do or what is the use of the sun if there is no food to eat, for in its absence the creature will not survive.

So, all these entities are the 1st categories of Gods who reside in the eastern side of the heart. They should be respected, adored and honoured for the good characteristics, noble virtues and sublime essence that they represent, and not just because they are some powerful Lord who will punish severely if not shown due respect.

The vital signs of life in a human body as shown by his powers to speak, see, hear and think are all different attributes of, or functions carried out by the supreme consciousness called Brahma residing disguised as his ‘Pran’ or the vital wind called breath present in his body. This ‘Pran’ is also synonymous with the Atma/soul, and therefore, Atma/soul is synonymous with Brahma. A man might not speak but he can see, hear and think, he might not see and speak (e.g. a blind and dumb man) but he can hear and think, he might not speak, see and hear (e.g. a dumb, blind and deaf man) but he can think. Finally he might not even think (e.g. when he is sleeping) when all his vital functions collapse into the Atma, but he still is alive. Overtly, for all external purposes, he appears to be dead because he exhibits none of the signs of life depicted by the body when he is awake, but he continues to breathe and therefore, is fully alive. He can never be treated as ‘dead’. So, the factor which decides whether a man is alive or dead is not his faculty of speech or sight or hearing or thinking, but the ‘Pran’ present in his body. As long as he breathes, he is deemed to be alive. That is, the Atma is the entity that truthfully represents consciousness or Brahma, and any person who recognises this fact that all the patron Gods supervising the various activities of creation ultimately find rest in the Atma or Brahma, and then re-emerge from it —as in the case when all the organs of perception and action start to function when a man wakes up from his sleep —is deemed to be an adroit, wise and enlightened person who acquires such stupendous powers that impossible things can be accomplished by him, such as for example the shifting of the mountain. The ‘shifting of the mountain’ is simply a figure of speech to emphasise an enlightened person’s potentials and prowess than the actual and physical movement of the mountain, for the mountain, obviously, doesn’t move! The word Pran broadly refers to the essential vibrations of life; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life.

Vyan is the vital wind that maintains equilibrium in the body. It is present everywhere in the body. The ears are the literal doors or holes through which the vital wind called Vyan entered the body and the Moon-God took its abode there at the time of creation when the ‘Viraat Purush’ created man in his image and ordained that the various Gods should take up residence in the various parts of the human body which corresponded to the respective part of the ‘Viraat Purush’ himself from which these Gods were created.

The Sun was created from the Viraat's eyes, so it took up its residence in the human eye. Similarly, the Moon was created from the Viraat's ears, so it found shelter in the human ear. And so on and so forth.

Any student of biology knows that the semi-circular canals present in the ear are responsible for maintaining balance in the body. Patients of low or high blood pressure or those suffering from misbalanced pressure of air on the ear drums (the tympanic membrane) can experience fluttering of that drum, snapping sounds when inhaling as well as the sense of dizziness. This can be rectified by deeply inhaling wind, clipping the nostrils tight shut and trying to exhale. The pressure of wind causes the tympanic membrane to inflate and open the closed eustachian tube with a snap. The patient feels relieved.

The ears are the apparatus by which we 'hear and gather' information. Hence, they are the 'ventilators' of the house through which fresh air representing new information and knowledge enters, and like the ventilators, they are placed on the top. The moon is regarded as the pitcher where the Amrit or the elixir of eternity is stored by the Gods. This moon, therefore, symbolises the essential extract (nourishing elements) present in food. Every wise, erudite and knowledgeable person gets fame, renown and a following of disciples, which in turn translates into wealth and ample food to eat, and therefore these qualities represent Yash and Sampadaa respectively.

Apaan wind is the one which goes down in the body and regulates the intake of food as well as its excretion. It is the wind which enables a person to speak because it helps to digest food which in turn provides the necessary energy to a man enabling him to gather sufficient energy to speak, for a weak and starving man can't speak much, and it is associated with the fire element because it helps the body to digest food and provide it with energy to speak. The enzymes present in the alimentary canal which digest food are all acidic or 'hot' in nature like the fire. This is why food is digested in the intestines and utilized by the body by the combined efforts of the *Apaan* wind, the *Samaan* wind and *Vyan* winds. Without the presence of 'heat and warmth' in the body, it would be dead, and there would be no question of eating, digesting etc. So the importance of 'fire' cannot be overstated.

Righteousness, auspiciousness, morality, ethic etc. as well as the study of scriptures, contemplation and meditation are the different virtues which are associated with Brahm realisation, and therefore they are manifestation of his divine characters such as divine glories and virtues. That is why they are called Brahma Tej because the elementary force operating in them is 'Brahm' as opposed to the demonic forces present in the form of worldly pursuits, thinking of worldly matters and devoting oneself to studying worldly material sciences and acquiring worldly skills which are far removed from spiritual knowledge leading to the upliftment of the soul. These features are like Christ and anti-Christ.

Since the downward peristaltic movement of the intestines helps in taking in food, digesting it and help in its excretion, the *Apaan* wind is likened to the ability of the body to absorb and assimilate nourishment from food, or be a 'consumer of food'. The energy trapped in the food is released in the body and empowers it to speak and to acquire all the glorious potentials that Brahm possesses, called Brahma Tej, such as the powers to think righteously, contemplate, meditate, procreate, sustain, protect and nourish the world as well as be auspicious, pious, wise and enlightened.

Samaan is the vital wind that regulates circulation in the body as well as proper and balanced distribution of nourishment to all the cells of the body. The word 'Samaan' means 'equanimity, equity and uniformity'. This wind distributes food and water equitably and uniformly throughout the body, hence has the name of *Samaan*. The mind is associated with this wind because any disturbance in the distribution of food and water

in the body will cause unrest in the mind. Also, when the mind is disturbed, it affects the whole body, thereby disturbing the equilibrium of nourishment in the cells of the body because this wind gets disturbed. Varun and water (cloud) were created by the 'Viraat Purush' from his 'Mana' (mind). Hence, the water element in the form of the cloud is also a form of Samaan wind. More practically, we see that the proper distribution of food in the body depends upon the blood which is a vehicle for such transport of the nutrients present in the food to all the parts of the body. Blood is a fluid, and fluidity depends upon the water element. Without water, the whole process of digestion and absorption will come to standstill. The mind is the epicenter of wisdom and knowledge; it is the regulatory authority of the various functions and actions of the body. A good, healthy, wise and intelligent mind will obviously lead to fame and glory. The proper maintenance of the level of fluids in the body keeps the body healthy and in prime shape with a glowing skin and a complexion full of luster.

Udaan wind rises from the bottom of the body and goes up to the head. It symbolises 'elevation and levitation, upliftment and up gradation'. The word 'Udaan' itself means 'to fly, to go up'. It signifies the inclination of the man to do noble deeds and use his legs to walk higher and climb higher in the spiritual realm. It literally 'helps the soul to fly off into the sky like the bird'; hence it has the name 'Udaan'. Like the hot air balloon, any wind that helps lift a heavier-than-wind object into the air is called 'Udaan Vayu'.

Since air fills the whole sky, there is no segregation between them. It is not possible to separate the sky from the wind or air element simply because the wind or the air element has the tendency to occupy all the space that is available to it. Anything that can 'lift' a heavy body from the ground must be stronger and more powerful than the body which it lifts as well as the forces which try to pull the body down. Hence, this 'Udaan' wind is synonymous with the quality of Aj or Oj (अज—strength, valour, power, potentials and prowess present in a creature). Its glory and importance in upliftment of the man, i.e. in inspiring him towards nobler pursuits and goals in life, and assiduously endeavour for realisation of Brahm makes it Maha (महः), that is important and significant, marked by greatness, grandeur, potent and majesty.

⁵These five organs collectively form the *Indriya Pankti* or the row or series of units that form the sense organs of the body of the individual creature. These five units control what the creature sees, hears, thinks, speaks and feels, and hence are the 'cause' of all its reactions and responses, its behaviours and thought processes as well as its personality, character traits and characteristic inclinations, habits and temperaments. Together they determine how and in what intensity the creature would respond to a given stimuli or set of circumstances. This in turn decides the personality and behaviour of the individual creature, how he interacts with the outside world, and what he makes of this life and its numerous opportunities. In the final analysis, these five sense organs are the means by which the Atma becomes aware of anything related to the external gross world of material objects as well as how and what the response should be. They help the Atma to interact with this world—receiving inputs and responding to them. These sense organs are the external arms of the Atma which helps the latter to relate itself with the world. They can be linked to the tentacles of the octopus or the pseudo arms of the amoeba.

⁶This is called the *Dhatu Pankti* or the series of five units that form the essential or basic infrastructure or skeleton of the gross body in which the pure conscious Atma lives. These three rows of units—viz. the five vital winds, the five sense organs, and the five gross parts that form the skeleton of the body—are called *Adhyatma Pankti* because they are directly related to the Atma. This is because the Atma lives in the gross body made up of these essential units which have been classified into three types depending upon their functions and degree of grossness. But to make the body function normally and make it a

worthy habitat of the Atma, each individual unit of this setup has equal importance and utility. For example, the body cannot do without the vital air known as the breath as much as its inability to maintain its integrity without the sense organs or the internal infrastructure such as the bone or the vein.

⁷The ladder has horizontal steps, and in order to reach the top one has to climb each step. In other words, each unit in the series mentioned in this verse has its unique importance and significance. All form an integral part of the ladder or the flight of steps which take the aspirant to the supreme Brahm much like one reaches the upper storey of a building or the citadel located at the top of the mountain by climbing the steps leading to it. Even if one step is blocked or damaged say by an avalanche, one has to wait till the path is cleared and repaired by engineers before proceeding ahead. Likewise, one has to understand where he presently stands vis-à-vis his mental bearing, intellectual level of development and spiritual stature before he can chalk out a strategy to move ahead from his present state of existence to reach the ultimate spiritual goal of self-realisation and Brahm-realisation. This is a metaphor for final liberation and deliverance of the creature from the bondage of this world of ignorance and its entrapping delusory perceptions. The ultimate goal of life is the final emancipation and salvation of the Spirit—or reaching that state from where there is no return to this cycle of transmigration. This is called the ‘Kaivalya Mukti’—i.e. the liberation and deliverance which is one of its kind.

⁸The Atma of the creature is its true identity. This Atma has to live inside the body, and not without it or outside of it. In order to achieve emancipation and obtain salvation, one has to use this body, and that too while one is alive in this world, because for a dead man either hell or heaven become irrelevant. All the various units mentioned in this verse above pertain to the ‘living world’ or the ‘conscious world’. It is in this world that the creature does good deeds and acquires truthful knowledge which ensures his gradual spiritual elevation till the time it reaches the zenith of self-realisation which is tantamount to Brahm-realisation. This exalted stature is equivalent to liberation from the fetters of ignorance and delusions, which delivers the creature from his horrifying torments and provides him with eternal peace and beatitude. When this auspicious spiritual goal is achieved, the apparently never-ending cycle of death and birth is disrupted, and the creature gets what is known as Moksha—i.e. the final emancipation and salvation of the soul.]

Valli 2, Anuvak 1

[This Anuvak briefly describes the eclectic spiritual rewards that come to the spiritual aspirant from Brahm realisation. It goes on to describe the genesis of creation.]

1. OM salutations! It has been declared in the scriptures that one who is well versed in the truth about the supreme transcendental Brahm is deemed to have attained a spiritual stature which is supreme and synonymous with the ultimate Absolute Truth of creation known as the Parmatma who is the supreme cosmic Soul of the entire creation. This Absolute Truth is Brahm.

That Brahm, which is the target of all spiritual endeavours and the teaching of the scriptures, is the ultimate and irrefutable Truth of creation. It is an embodiment of Gyan (eclectic, eternal and truthful knowledge), and it is known as Anant (because it is without an end).

A wise, erudite and enlightened Brahmin (i.e. any learned person who is acquainted with the knowledge pertaining to the supreme Truth and absolute Reality of creation known as Brahm) is one who understands that this esoteric, enigmatic and mysterious supreme transcendental entity known as 'Brahm' uniformly pervades and is universally present throughout the space of the sky in an invisible form. The same Brahm also lives ensconced secretly in the cave-like sequestered chambers of the heart of the spiritual aspirant¹. [That is, Brahm has a macrocosmic presence as the vast and fathomless sky, and at the same time it is present in an atomic form in the subtle space of the heart of the creature as his Atma at the microcosmic level.]

Now the sequence of creation is being narrated. Verily, it is from this conscious element known as the cosmic Atma that emerged the 'Akash' (sky or space element) in the beginning of the visible creation. [The sky is the subtlest amongst the five gross elements in creation which formed its building blocks.]

From the Akash came into being the 'Vayu' (wind or air element). From the Vayu came into being the 'Agni' (fire element and energy). From the Agni came into being the 'Apaha' (water element). From the Apaha came into being the 'Prithivi' (earth element). From the Prithivi came into being the 'Aushadhi' (the different herbs and medicinal plants). From the Aushadhi came into being the 'Anna' (food in the form of crops and flesh). And finally from the Anna came into being the 'Purush' (literally the 'man' but implying the entire living world)².

Since the body of a man has been formed or crafted from the essential juices in the form of nourishment extracted from food of all hues, it is said to be a visible manifestation moulded out of Anna (food) and Rasa (juice or extract of herbs or plants)³.

The 'head' of the living creature (e.g. the man) is therefore the head of that divine Being, the 'right' hand or side of the creature is the right hand or side of the divine Being, and the 'left' hand or side of the creature is the left hand or side of the divine Being. The 'middle' area (i.e. the chest where the heart is located) is the symbolic abode of the Atma or soul. And the lower end or tail end or the hind part of the body represented by the 'legs' (i.e. the part of the body below the navel up to the feet) helps it to be established or stand on the ground. Hence, it is called its 'Pratistha', i.e. which aids in establishing the creature and helps him to acquire fame, glory, majesty and reputation along with the erudition and wisdom to obtain his objective in life^{4**}.

Verily, it is for this purpose that this verse has been narrated (1).

[Note--¹At the cosmic level, this 'sky' is a metaphor for the vastness and all-inclusiveness of the supreme Brahm which encompasses everything that exists in the entire creation, while at the microcosmic level of the individual creature this Brahm is located in the secret cavern-like heart in the form of the pure consciousness or Atma. This secret and most enigmatic esoteric supreme entity can be known only through the application of the subtle mind as the latter has the potentials of penetrating deep inside the surface and peeping into the realm of the sub-conscious to unravel the secret of Brahm. The gross organs of the body are totally incompetent to perceive Brahm.

When the wise and enlightened person realises, with due application of his subtle mind and intellect, that he is a microcosmic embodiment of the macrocosmic, all-pervading and all-encompassing supreme transcendental Truth and pure consciousness in creation known as Brahm, and that his true identity is not his gross body but his pure conscious Atma which is the only truth in his body and which is synonymous with Brahm, then this person begins to see the creation from a wider and broader perspective

which comes with wisdom and knowledge and which is absolutely different from the selfish view that is seen with the physical organ of sight known as the eyes of the body. Such a man realises, as a result of deep study of the scriptures and self realisation, that his Atma is the same as the Atma residing in the heart of all the creatures of creation. And therefore, the pain and suffering as well as the happiness and joys of others are also his own.

To draw another parallel, the enlightened man can be compared to the Sun because even as the Sun is bright and splendorous in the sky from where it removes all darkness from all the remote corners of the world, the wisdom and erudition of an enlightened and realised man is able to dispel all the darkness of ignorance that might engulf him, thereby lighting up the eternal Truth for him. With this light of realisation of the Truth, such a man sees Brahm and the Atma, in all their glorious and splendorous radiance, everywhere and in all the creatures.

This is what is meant here when the verse says that ‘he begins to enjoy everything in this world at the same time’.

²Everything that has come into existence has one or the other quality or virtue inherent in it which is characteristic of that entity. In the present case, all the five elements that came into being also have certain attributes and qualities that are specific to them and form their defining characteristic feature. The number of such qualities or attributes or virtues, called the ‘Gunas’, would determine the grossness or subtlety of that individual entity; the lesser number of Gunas mean the higher level of subtlety and vice versa. The first element is *Akash* or sky. This element has the basic virtue of bearing sound, and it is characterised by its ability to be able to propagate sound. Since sound is the subtlest of virtues in existence and sky is the subtlest of the elements, the duo are the nearest analogue for Brahm or ‘pure consciousness’ which is the ultimate subtle entity in this creation.

Next comes the *Vayu* or wind/air element. This element has two basic virtues or qualities—viz. one that comes from its predecessor sky, i.e. the ability to bear and propagate sound, and other characteristic virtue is to make itself ‘felt’ by the sense of ‘touch’. This is evident when we ‘feel the touch’ of a soft breeze blowing against our face even though we cannot see the wind or air. Similarly, sound is generated and propagated in the form of waves and it requires the medium of the air to go from one place to another. That is why we cannot ‘hear’ when there is no open space filled with air between the speaker and the listener. Similarly, we can hear the ‘howl’ of a raging wind during a severe storm. Since the air or wind element has two virtues inherent in it as compared to one virtue present in the sky, it is grosser or heavier than the latter.

The third element is *Agni* or fire which has three basic virtues or qualities or attributes (Gunas) as its integral feature. Like its predecessor, it also borrowed its first two characteristic virtues of sound and touch from the air element, and the third is typical to it, and this is the property of having a ‘form, size, colour and contour’. This is a metaphoric way of saying that the fire is the first element that can be physically ‘seen’ by the naked eye. The fire has ‘light’ emanating from it, and this light makes it possible for us to not only see the fire burning but also the surrounding area. In other words, the fire renders everything in this world visible to the creature. Besides this, the outlines of the fire are clearly discernible, its features are clearly visible in the form of a tongue of flame, the colour of this flame, the sputtering sound that emanates from the burning fire, and the bright and crackling sparklers that fly from it in every direction to proclaim that the fire is established at a particular place away from the spot where the sparkler lands. As compared to the sky and the air which spread and cover all available space, the fire has a localized existence, thereby establishing its heavier and grosser nature because the more subtle and lighter the entity is the more difficult would it be to contain it and restrict it to

a specific area. Having three attributes as enumerated here, the fire element is heavier or grosser than the sky element.

The fourth entity that came into being in terms of creation and also in terms of grossness is *Apaha* or water element. It has four qualities or virtues characteristic to it—three borrowed from its predecessor the Agni element, and the fourth being its own. In other words, the water element has ‘juice or essence or fluidity’ giving rise to the sense of ‘taste’ as its own specific attribute, besides exhibiting the three that it borrowed from the fire element—viz. it has ‘sound’ as is evident when we hear the thunderous roar of a deep waterfall or the ocean, the gurgling, gushing and rippling sound of a spring or a brook, or the swishing, splashing, bubbling, sloshing and rippling sound of a river, it has ‘touch’ which gives rise to the sense of it being felt cold, hot or warm, and ‘form’ because water can be easily seen and contained and given any shape such as having the contours of a river, an ocean or even the water in a bottle. Having four attributes as enumerated here, the water element is therefore heavier and grosser than the fire element.

Finally in this progression is the fifth element, viz. the *Prithivi* or earth element. It has five attributes or qualities typical to it. Out of these five, it has borrowed four from its predecessor the water element, while the last attribute or quality is specifically its own—and it is ‘smell’. That is why all things present in the earth and having the earth element as one of its constituent emanates a smell no matter what name is given to it, such as a fragrance, perfume, scent, aroma or stink.

The existence of the other four characters are easy to witness in earth—viz. it makes a ‘sound’ which is heard outside its atmosphere as a humming sound attributed to its magnetic field, it has ‘sound’ integrally present in its bosom which can be heard and measured by sonographic instruments, and the earth is full of noises and it is not as quiet a place as other deep recesses of the cosmos. The earth surely has a definable and solid ‘form’ which can be ‘seen, touched and felt’. Having five attributes as enumerated here, the earth element is therefore heavier and grosser than the water element.

Anything that has a density and shows movement which is a vital sign of life has a propensity to attract other lighter and subtler entities towards its self as is evident from the fact that the heavy earth which constantly rotates on its axis is able to not only keep the heavier elements such as the water and fire attracted to it but also manages to prevent the air element from escaping into the outer reaches of the cosmos. The only element that remains beyond its command is the ‘sky’ and its constituent the ‘sound’. This is why we have no ‘fire’ and ‘water’ outside the atmosphere of the earth but ‘wind’ in the form of cosmic storms and ‘air’ in the form of cosmic ether as well as ‘sky’ in the form of cosmic space elements exist even millions of miles away from earth.

This earth has been envisioned as the base or foundation of the living world. In the progression of creation wherein one gross element emerges from its subtle parent, the next entity is the herb or medicinal plants. Such plants are small in size and rare, and they have a natural inclination to be of benefit to others in a selfless manner—thereby making them subtler than their bigger, heavier and grosser brethren in the form of verdant forests, green crops, mosses and ferns and the numerous other varieties of plants and trees that thrive endlessly on this earth.

The seed produced from these plants are metaphors for the sperm of the Supreme Being because they help to perpetuate this creation. Thus, from the seed was produced the ‘fruit’ in the form of the ‘living creature’ who inhabit this known world.

There are many Upanishads dealing with these *elements*, notably the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 5, and Subala-panishad, in its verse 2 of Canto 13, as well as in Canto 14.

³We come to a very interesting point now—when we say that the body is ‘moulded or crafted from something, it is implied that there must be someone who has done this moulding or crafting. Who is he, the question arises. That ‘he’ is Brahm; Brahm is the supreme master ‘molder or crafter’ who has expertly moulded or skillfully crafted this entire creation from the very basic and primary ingredients of sky, air, fire, water and earth that came into being at the beginning.

How the different *juices of creation* help sustain life and body have been elaborately explained elsewhere in other Upanishads, notably in Chandogya Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition, in its Canto 6, Section 5-9, and Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition in its Canto 1, Brahman 5, verse no. 1-3

The *Genesis of Creation* has been elaborately and fascinatingly described elsewhere in other Upanishads as well. Some of them are the following-- (a) Aiteriyo-panishad of Rig Veda tradition; (b) Mudgalo-pansishad of Rig Veda tradition, in its Canto 2-4; (c) Chandogyo-pansishad of Sam Veda tradition, in its Canto 3, Section 19, Canto 4, Section 17, verse nos. 1-3, Canto 6, Section 2-10; (d) Painglo-pansishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1-2; (e) Subalo-pansishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1-15; (f) Brihad Aranyak Upansishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, Brahman 1-2, 4-5, Canto 6, Brahman 4.

⁴A man stands on his legs, and this ‘standing’ is a figure of speech indicating that he has acquired a great name and enviable fame for himself in the entire spectrum of creation. This is because a man has intelligence and wisdom, he can think and decide for himself, he can choose and pick, he can study the scriptures and find his final emancipation and salvation which is not possible in any other life forms such as that of an animal or a plant.

The human body acts as a launching pad for the Atma’s final exit from the cycle of birth and death—and therefore it likened to the Atma’s Pratistha. It is this body that gives the creature called a man its honour and dignity as well as helps to establish its superiority over the rest of the creation. The creature known as the ‘man’ is the master of all other creatures though the same Atma lives in all of them. That is why this leg is called the Pratistha of the Atma in the body of a human being.

There is another way of looking at this. The word ‘end’ signifies that this human body should be treated as the ‘last post’ in the arduous journey that the Atma has been undertaking through numerous births and deaths. It is the ‘last chance’ to get liberation and deliverance. If it is lost, then everything is lost. So a wise and erudite man should endeavour to use this golden opportunity in the best possible way the scriptures have described.

Yet another interpretation may be this—the person’s establishment of wisdom and intelligent behaviour depends upon his ability to interpret what he has learnt from his past experience, or from his ‘hindsight’ indicating the metaphoric importance of the ‘hind’ part of the body. What one leaves ‘behind’ as his legacy is more important than what he had done in his previous life before he was born with the present body.

**Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, Brahman 1 and 2 uses the metaphor of the horse to describe the living creation as a visible manifestation or personification of the Supreme Brahm. Similar concept has been envisioned in Chandogya Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition in its Canto 5, Section 18, verse no. 2.]

Valli 2, Anuvak 2

[The following five Vallis, from no. 2 to no. 6, describe the origin of the five elements from the supreme Being and their transformation into the five 'Koshas' or sheaths that form the gross body of the creature and surround his 'true self' which is the pure conscious Atma.

This present Anuvak 2 describes the importance and significance of 'Anna' or food that is the main lifeline of the living world and forms the first Kosha or sheath called the 'Anna Maye Kosh' or the food sheath.]

1. It is from 'Anna', or the nourishment provided by the food eaten, that living beings are created. All the subjects (creatures) of this living kingdom, whether they be mobile or immobile (such as the man and the tree respectively), that have the earth as their base or habitat, are born¹ from the essential life-giving nourishment provided by food, are sustained by its life-sustaining properties, and merge in its primary elements at the time when the body perishes or dies². This is because Anna (food) has preceded all the creatures³. Anna is the primary element needed to sustain life and is therefore regarded as the best, the elder or the superior entity in the living world.

Anna is called 'Sarwoshadh' or literally the entity that is the remedy of all ills, implying that it is the one entity without which life is just not feasible, sustainable and imaginable. It is the one indispensable entity that is universally and unambiguously needed by all the living creatures of all shades and hues. Anna is the most important ingredient in life; it is the most essential and primary requirement for sustenance of life in any form. Hence it is deemed to be the most esteemed, the most senior and the most honourable entity vis-à-vis the rest of the elements in creation. That is why it is called 'Sarwoshadh'—one that is the most exalted and like a crown jewel in creation. It is from the Anna that living beings are born, it is the Anna that sustains them from their cradle to their graves, and it is the Anna that helps in their growth and development⁴.

Those wise, erudite and sagacious persons who are convinced that 'Anna is Brahm personified', i.e. who worship and honour 'food' as a manifestation of the stupendous life creating and sustaining virtues and abilities of the supreme transcendental Authority in creation known as Brahm—in other words, who see food as a visible divine blessing of the supreme Lord which he has provided to his creation for its sustenance as well as to help it gather sufficient energy, stamina and strength to recreate the next generation in the form of an offspring—are sure to get all nourishment and benefit that the food has to offer⁵.

Anna is eaten by all the living beings, and the irony is that they are also eaten by this Anna. This is why it is called 'Anna' meaning 'one that is eaten as well as that eats'⁶.

Now, enclosed in this outer sheath formed out of the food element and hence called the Anna Maye Kosh or the food sheath (i.e. the gross body of the creature build from the nutrients extracted from the food eaten by him) is the vital factor called 'life or consciousness' present in the second sheath called 'Pran Maye Kosh'. This is the cell which harbours the Pran which are the different vital winds present in the body and which are synonymous with the actual presence of 'life' inside the outer sheath of the creature's body called the Anna Maye Kosh⁷. The Anna Maye Kosh is gross and inane

but it surrounds the subtle and life-bearing sheath called the *Pran Maye Kosh* and surrounds it from all sides to form a sack-like structure. These Prans or vital winds fill up the entire space enclosed by the food sheath which consists the outer covering of the body.

This Pran is distinctly different from the external gross body of the creature—for whereas the external body is perishable and gross, the Pran is an eternal entity and subtle. Verily, this Pran is a personification of the eternal and supreme transcendental Being called Purush who resides in the body of the individual creature as his consciousness and identity at the micro level of creation, and in the entire creation as the cosmic all-pervading universal Consciousness at the macro level.

This Pran is therefore of the same dimension and properties as the Purush whose personification it is. In other words, the vital Wind or Air called the Pran is the essential 'life' of a living being, and since it is a manifestation of the Supreme Being known as the Purush, it also has a body of its own, though this body is subtle and invisible unlike the gross and visible external body consisting of the food sheath.

This subtle and invisible body of the Purush in the form of the vital wind has all the subtle body parts symbolised by the different forms of this vital wind. Thus, the 'head' is represented by the vital wind known as Pran (breath without which the creature would suffocate to death); the 'right' side or flank is represented by the vital wind known as Vyan (which pervades thorough the body and maintains equilibrium); the 'left' side or flank is symbolised by the vital wind called Apaana (which passes down the intestines and helps in digestion and elimination of waste from the body); the Akash or sky is its Atma or 'middle' parts or the area of the heart (because the Atma lives in the lotus-like heart of the creature); and its tail or 'lower' parts of the body is represented by the Prithivi or earth (because it stands upon its legs much like the earth which supports the entire living world and upon which the rest of the creatures live and find their abode).

This Shloka (verse) is in relation to this body which has Pran residing in it to represent the Purush, who is the Supreme Being. In other words, the supreme transcendental Brahm resides in the body of the creature as its pure conscious Atma as well as the life giving vital wind called the Pran (1).

[Note—¹The essential life giving energy contained in the food eaten is converted into sperms or eggs. From them is created new life forms.

²This is because the body of all living creatures is based on organic matters, and after death the body decays and carbon products are released into the soil of the earth to be re-absorbed by the plants which are eaten by other creatures to sustain themselves. That is why the dead body is usually called 'Maati' which literally translates into 'soil or mud'. It is from this Maati or soil that the plants, which form the basic food of all living creatures, draw their nourishment. Even those who eat flesh are indirectly being nourished by these plants because the animal whose flesh is being eaten has drawn its nourishment by eating plants.

³Even as a creature is born from a parent who was present before the creature's birth and who nourishes it in its womb, after it is born and throughout its life, this Anna or food also carries the same function. Again, even as the body of the creature is moulded in the womb of the mother and replicates the body of the parent, the creature created by this food also symbolically replicates it. That is why the gross body is called *Anna Maye Kosh*, or the enclosure or cell (Kosh) made or crafted out of the food (Anna) eaten by the creature that encloses its true self (the pure conscious Atma).

⁴The inherent virtues present in food are its vital energy and basic nutrients as well as its life sustaining and creating properties. When food is eaten, its vitality, energy and other essential eclectic virtues are absorbed by the body and this extract is converted into sperm which then literally transfers the energy, vitality and the goodness of the food to the offspring. The fact that it is not possible to survive without food is succinctly brought out in an episode mentioned in Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 5, Section 7 in which sage Uddyalak had proved this point to his son Shewtketu. The astounding importance and indisputable value of Anna or food have been succinctly mentioned in many major Upanishads, such as Chandogya Canto 6, Section 5-7, and Canto 7, Section 9; Subalopanishad, Canto 14; and Brihad Aranyak Canto 1, Brahman 5, verse no. 1-3 to mention a few. In fact, the entire process of creation hinges on the ability of the organism to eat food, digest it and utilise its glorious values while rejecting or eliminating its grosser parts. We deduce that when the Upanishad praises Anna or food, it lauds and honours its divine and sublime values which are subtle and hidden from view, and not its external attractive features or enticements in the form of its mouth watering taste, its charming colours or its enchanting overbearing aroma.

⁵Food is the very basis of life, it is the only factor without which no life can be sustained, and as is mentioned in the previous stanza, it preceded creation as well as follows it. It precedes the creature in the form of the sperm out of which the creature is conceived in the mother's womb, and it proceeds in the form of the fundamental elements into which the organic body of the creature breaks up after death and decay. That entity that lasts after the creature has died, and which pre-existed it and from which the present life was born is known as the everlasting, imperishable and infinite Brahm. Both these entities—the subtle and invisible nutrients present in the food eaten by the creature as well as the basic elements called the five Bhuts that act as fundamental building blocks of life (i.e. earth, water, fire, sky and air) create and sustain life; both precede and proceed it; both are absolutely essential; both are not visible; and both have manifested themselves in the form of the body of the creature. The gross part of the body called the Anna Maye Kosh is created by the food eaten by the creature, while the subtle and essential life-giving force of Nature revealed in the form of the vital winds called the Prans mould the *Pran Maye Kosh*. The body would need both to survive, and therefore it represents the glorious manifestation of Brahm both in its gross aspect as well as in its subtle aspect.

It would be pertinent to note here that both Anna and Brahm have two distinct forms—one is the visible form which is the gross aspect of both the food and Brahm, and the other is their subtle forms which is not visible but is nevertheless the essential part of both of them. The visible form of Anna consists of the external features of what we eat, and its subtle and invisible form is the various nutrients and fundamental life-sustaining properties that are inherently present in the food eaten by the creature. Similarly, the visible world we see is the gross external form of Brahm while the numerous qualities and virtues as well as the different forms of subtle elements that constitute this visible world that are an integral part of this creation are Brahm's invisible form.

⁶If food is eaten in moderation it is of course beneficial for all the creatures, while if it is indulged into it proves to be as harmful as poison, leading to so many diseases and their attendant problems. This is a metaphoric way of saying that 'food eats those who eat it'!

⁷According to metaphysics, the body of the creature consists of the following *Koshas* or cells or sheaths which enclose its true self in the form of the pure conscious Atma. These sheaths are—Food Sheath (Anna Maye Kosh), Vital Air Sheath (Pran Maye Kosh), Mental Sheath (Mano Maye Kosh), Intellect Sheath (Vigyan Maye Kosh), and Bliss Sheath (Anand Maye Kosh). These different Koshas have been succinctly described in

Paingalo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse no. 4. Presently, this stanza is referring to the second sheath consisting of the vital winds which pervade throughout the body and keeps the food sheath maintainable in its current shape and form. To illustrate this point we can cite the example of a balloon—the external body of the balloon is the Anna Maye Kosh, while the air inside it is the Pran Maye Kosh. If the air escapes, the external sheath of the balloon would collapse.]

Valli 2, Anuvak 7

1. Before the coming into being of this manifest (visible) world, everything was in a 'formless' form which had no attributes and qualities, no names and contours, and therefore appears to be a 'non-truthful existence' because that which cannot be visualised and imagined, that which cannot be defined and known, that which has no form and name appears to be the 'non-truth'. That is, there was an all-pervading, all-prevailing and all-permeating sense of unqualified neutrality which was neither true nor false!

Out of it emerged what is the known and verifiable, the tangible and 'truthful' world. This qualified creation had discernible attributes, qualities, virtues and specific characteristics¹.

[Then what happened? The answer is--] That formless, attributeless and unqualified entity metamorphosed its self into an entity that had a form, was with attributes and was qualified. That is why it is called 'Su-krit' or the 'one who is self created'.

That famous Sukrit is the entity which is indeed and without doubt the 'Rasa', which literally means the essence or juice at the core of the entire visible creation. [In other words, even as the fruit is valued by the body for its juice and not for the pulp, this world is valued for the presence of this eclectic entity known as conscious Brahm in the form of the Atma and not for the gross matter of which it is constituted.]

Indeed, when this juice or essence is accessed or drunk by a wise and self-realised person, it gives him eternal ecstasy and a sense of fulfillment.

Had there been no such 'living' entity known as the pure consciousness present in the subtle space of the heart (called the Hridaya Akash), who would have done the 'Apan Kriya' (which is the process of imbibing food, digesting it, extracting nutrition from it, and eliminating waste from the body) or the 'Pran Kriya' (which is the process of breathing and stoking the fire of life inside the otherwise dead and inert body). In fact, this mystical and enigmatic entity, i.e. the subtle Atma which is the 'pure consciousness' present in the otherwise 'unconscious' gross body, is the one who not only enables and empowers the body to do what it does, but also enjoys them and lets the creature's body enjoy them as well.

At the time when an aspirant is able to realise (through the medium of Yoga which helps to establish a coordination between all units of consciousness in a harmonious way) that this eclectic entity known as Brahm—an entity that is invisible, has no specific body or form or shape or odour or colour, is indefinable and beyond the scope of the faculty of speech, and which needs no support or prop for its existence because it is the support and prop of others—resides in his own heart and he remains firmly established in or grouted to this divine supreme Truth, it is only then that he is able to reach the state of fearlessness².

On the contrary, if the aspirant treats himself as separate and different from that Truth, or in other words when unfortunately he dissociates himself from the eternal Truth residing in his own self as his pure consciousness, and instead begins to treat this gross body and the material world as the ‘truth’ about himself, he is subjected to all kinds of fears and their attendant sorrows and miseries so typical of this mundane existence.

So it happens that the same Brahm can be a source of fearlessness for a wise man as well as of all the fears for an unwise one³ (1).

[Note—¹This concept has been described else where also in the process of Genesis of Creation, especially in Subalo-panishad, 4/4; Chandogya Upanishad, 6/12/1; and Brihad Aranyak 1/4/7.

²*Fearlessness* from many aspects of life—such as fearlessness from death because Brahm in the form of his Atma is eternal; fearlessness from enemies because he begins to treat all with a profound degree of love, compassion, equanimity and fortitude as he treats all living beings alike, being an image of the same Brahm or Atma that resides in his own heart; fearlessness from wants and shortages because the Atma is ever contented and fulfilled, never in dearth of anything.

How different degrees of erudition and knowledge of the same entity effects the creature has been described by the God of Death, Yam, himself in Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 2, verse no. 4 onwards, especially Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 7.

³It is very easy to understand this phenomenon. Brahm pervades uniformly throughout the known as well as the unknown world, the visible as well as the invisible world, the animate as well as the inanimate world, the microcosmic as well as the macrocosmic world. So, when the wise and self-realised man sees Brahm in its purified form as the ‘essence and juice’ of creation residing in his own Atma as well as outside of him as the consciousness prevailing throughout the world, he exults in its glory and basks in its brilliant sun-shine of divinity and holiness. On the contrary, if he sees Brahm with the eyes of materialism, he would also enjoy that ambrosia of happiness and joy that are an integral part of Brahm, because the matter which is so adored by him is also a form of Brahm, but such happiness and bliss would be short-lived as the material world is perishable and transient, and anything that is not eternal but temporary cannot be the ‘truth’. Pursuing falsehood instead of truthfulness can never give permanent peace and tranquility to anyone, whether wise or not.]

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5. (e) **The Yogtattva Upanishad:--**

(Verse nos. 10-11)

“Verse no. 10 = [This verse briefly summarises the first moments of creation, and is akin to all the Upanishads that deal with the genesis of creation.]

In the beginning, that principle primary and primordial ‘essence’ (Tattva) was absolutely placid and calm¹.

Then there were minute and almost imperceptible ripples in it just like the ones in water, indicating some subtle and secret activity². This caused the element of Ahankar³ (the sense of pride and ego) to emerge in it.

This activity resulted in the formation of the primary cosmic egg which had certain Gunas⁴ (inherent qualities, attributes, virtues and characteristics) that would determine the specific nature, temperament and personality traits of the creature that would finally emerge from this egg when it hatched. [These Gunas were like the chemical ingredients in any fluid that determine its fundamental qualities and characteristics. They would determine the underlying subtle and basic nature, the temperament and character traits of the offspring, i.e. the creature, which would emerge when the egg hatched finally upon maturity.]

Besides the above, the yolk of the egg had as its basic constituent ingredients the five primary elements called 'Panch Maha Bhuts' (which are sky, air, fire, water and earth). These elements determined the basic texture of this yolk that would determine the form which the offspring (creature) would get when the egg finally hatched⁵ (10).

[Note--¹There is a play on the word *Tattva* here. We speak of a flower's *Tattva*, i.e. the volatile liquid extracted from the flowers and used as various scents and perfumes. It is called the 'essence' of the flower. Even the nectar is called 'essence' or *Tattva* of the flower. The oil extracted from seeds and herbs are also called their *Tattva* or essential extracts. The common factor in all these is the 'liquid or fluid' nature of the *Tattva*. It is this reason why life is said to have emerged in water, a fluid and elixir of life and vitality, the 'essence' or *Tattva* that sustains and protects life. The primary essence of creation was not some liquid as we understand the term; it was 'ethereal', more like the air or wind element, resembling more closely to the something that fills the outer space above the surface of the earth. It must be understood that though 'air' does not exist outside the atmosphere of the earth, it is not an absolute vacuum, for there is something that lies between any two celestial bodies or planets, separating them and preventing them from colliding with each other. All celestial bodies are dipped in this cosmic liquid which is like a 'volatile essence' drawn from flowers. It is 'volatile' because it is never the same, and that is why we say that the creation is continuously and perpetually changing and evolving. Had it not been so, had that *Tattva* been a solid, everything in creation would have been cast in one fixed mould for eternity.

²According to the philosophy of *Tantra Shastra* dedicated to the worship of divinity in the form of Shiva and Shakti, the process of creation took the following initial steps. Before anything came into being, Brahm, the supreme consciousness and the ultimate truth of creation, known as Shiva, was established in his own radiant effulgence or self-illumination symbolising his splendourous glory, majesty and divinity. Hence he was called 'Prakash', literally meaning light. When he decided to deliberate and actually started the process of deliberation in order to start the process of creation, there was a subtle 'spandan' or a slight throb or imperceptible movement which transformed into a vibration. The waves generated by this initial vibration developed in the cosmic ether and gradually coalesced with each other to give rise to higher waves of higher amplitudes. This produced the cosmic sound called the Naad. Since the creation was conceived in the bowl of the cosmic ether, the energy of the initial sound was focused at a central point, called the focal point or the dot or 'Bindu'. This Bindu contained the combined powers of both the male Shiva and the female Shakti like a dicotyledonous seed which produced the two separate entities called Shiva and Shakti. The union of these two resulted in the unfolding of the rest of the creation. Thus it will be observed that whatever exists in this creation can be traced back to this primeval Naad. Hence, the latter is called 'Shabda Brahm', or the Brahm as sound. Therefore it is very natural to assume that all Mantras dedicated to any divine entity and consisting of the sound element (because Mantra consist of letters and words, and are chanted or repeated to make them effective) has its

origin in this Shabda Brahm and gets its powers and energy from this Shabda Brahm. In other words, the Manta contains in itself the essential meaning, form and spirit of the deity whose Mantra it is and which is being worshipped and invoked. Constant repetition of the Mantra generates so much energy in due course of time that the deity being worshipped is revealed. This is because the sound has great powers and energy as is evident when reverberation of sound waves and the resonance created by them are so powerful and forceful that they can shatter sheet glass in windows when an explosion occurs near a building.

³This is because that Tattva thought to itself 'well, I have life in me; I can show activity; I can move; I am not dead'. This factor of 'I' was the root of Ahankar. That is why even today, the word 'I' is associated with ego, pride, vanity, arrogance and haughtiness, collectively called Ahankar.

⁴The three characteristic qualities inherently present in the creature, in different ratios, are the three thought textures which bombard the mind. These three thought textures are manifestations of the 'Vrittis and Vasanas' (inherent tendencies or desires) of the creature which mire its pure conscious Atma or soul as a covering or veil. These three basic qualities or *Gunas* which are inherent in all the living beings determine their nature, habits, temperaments and inclinations which in turn decide the behaviour, personality and outlook of each individual in this world.

(a) *Sata Guna* or quality is the best quality present in a creature and it is marked by a predominance of auspiciousness, righteousness, virtuousness and noble qualities. It is marked by such high standards of ethical existence that have, as their characteristic features, such qualities as coolness of head, peace, contentedness, humility, devotion, wisdom, mercy, compassion, creativity, selflessness, service, righteousness, virtuousness, holiness and nobility of thought and action etc. As is evident, these qualities are the best qualities that one can have in him; they have a spiritual dimension to them; they are spiritually uplifting and give a divine halo to those who practice them. This quality creates an inherent affinity in a creature towards things in life which are of high moral value and uplifting for the soul rather than things which are demoting and denigrating for the spirit.

The *Sata Guna* or quality is the veil covering the soul like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort. It is the foremost and the best amongst the three characteristics of a creature such as good and positive virtuous such as righteousness, creativity, noble deeds and thoughts, the positive qualities of service, benevolence, mercy, devotion, wisdom, holiness, piety etc.

(b) *Raja Guna* is the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, desires and attachments and their natural offshoots in a creature. It covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, a stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, desires, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, desire to sustain etc. All these pertain to this materialistic world, and they create an inherent affinity in a creature towards the material world of sense objects and their enjoyments rather than the world of spiritualism. In other words, those creatures who have this quality as a dominant trait are more inclined towards the world as compared to those creatures who have the *Sata* quality in a greater density. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the Satwic qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

The Rajsic quality or *Guna* can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality. Rajsic tendencies are the second best quality which

produces worldly desires, ambitions, passions, selfishness, various obsessions, desire to sustain and expand etc.

(c) *Tama Guna* is the third quality which is the meanest and basest of the three types of qualities in a creature. It is marked by evilness, perversions and sinfulness. It is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, leading him to such negative traits as sins, vices, perversions, greed, avarice, haughtiness, pride, lust, attachments, yearnings, intoxication, wild behaviour, promiscuity, evils, utter disregard for anything which is righteous, ethical and noble etc. This quality creates an inherent affinity in a creature towards things which are very mean and lowly, which are totally sensual and pertain to the immediate gratification of the sense urges without any thought to what would be their consequences in the long run. In brief, behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraving for the creature, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness of demeanors. It is the lowest and meanest of the three qualities leading to a person's downfall, ignominy and ruin.

The Tamsic quality or Guna covering the soul is like a foetus in the womb covered by the embryonic membrane—they cannot be removed easily and require diligence, effort, dedicated and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the three characteristics, the worst type to possess, and is marked by such negative traits as sin, evil, perversions, immorality, vices, misdemeanors, anger, inertia, delusions, deception, gloom, ignorance et al.

Since each individual is like an independent piece of mosaic that completes the entire picture in conjunction with other such pieces, this individual creature's nature and character helps to determine the overall shape of the creation. These Gunas keep the creation in a state of constant change, because numerous creatures die every moment and new ones are born. The Supreme Being has to be constantly on the alert because of this flux.

The various permutations and combinations of these three qualities create a particular 'nature' of an individual giving him his individuality and his special characters which are unique to him; they determine his temperament, behaviour, thought process et al. Two individuals having the same external form of the gross body—e.g. two men—might look very much alike but they vary immensely in their nature, habit, behaviour, thinking, outlook, action and deeds, wisdom and way of living. This is what is meant when it is said that a creature has to roam in 84 Lakh wombs or forms of life; it is only a metaphor—it does not mean an actual, countable specific number that there are actually and physically 84 Lakh types of bodies of living beings; it only symbolically refers to the huge possibilities that are possible with these three 'Gunas' and their different combinations that can imaginably produce a myriad variety of creation that can be created with these three basic qualities and their various sub classes of qualities.

The proportion of the three Gunas decides the nature, natural temperament, tendencies, habits and inclination of the creatures. For example, a person with a greater proportion of 'Satvic' (noble) characteristic will be considered nobler than a man with a greater proportion of 'Rajasic' or 'Tamsic' qualities. So we can say that sages, seers, prophets, scholars and generally enlightened persons have a high degree of 'Satvic' qualities in them; kings and householders who live a noble life are example of those with higher amount of 'Rajasic' quality in them; while sinners, killers, drunks, rowdy elements, cheats etc. are those people with higher 'Tamsic' quality in them. These Gunas have direct bearing on the personality of a man.

To understand how the three Gunas affect the Atma, let's take two examples—that of a hot piece of iron glowing red with heat, and the potter moulding various pots from the same clod of earth.

The supreme pure conscious cosmic Atma subjects the Bhoot Atma of the individual creature to the 'radiation' of these 'Gunas'. These 'Gunas' are the three basic qualities present in all the creatures in different permutations and combinations. These 'Gunas' effect the 'Bhoot Atma' differently based on a number of factors—such as for example, the present status of the 'Bhoot Atma' vis-à-vis its past deeds, their cumulative affects, the caliber of its mind and intellect, the position it occupies in the ladder of spiritual evolution, its willingness to change or subject itself to the effects of such radiation etc.

The concept can be understood differently also. A piece of iron, when heated, shows the heat as a 'red hot glow' which fully pervades the iron piece and becomes an integral part of it. The whole piece appears to be one whole mass of something which is red, hot and glowing. When beaten by a hammer, the iron piece bends and can be shaped into any shape. Each new shape, when heated, will show the same glow of red hot fire inside it. Similarly, the Atma provides consciousness to the creature, making it active and lively, subject to receptions of stimuli in the form of various perceptions originating in the external world and received through the organs of perception present in the gross body. The 'heated' body (i.e. the Bhoot Atma made active by the Atma) now becomes susceptible to change (from the impact of the three Gunas) much like the heated piece of iron being hammered by the hammer. The 'hammering' by the three 'Gunas' (the inherent qualities present in every creature) help to cast the individual creature into various moulds or shapes having different characteristics. Even as cold iron is not easily malleable, the creature without the infusion of life injected into it by the Atma is as good as dead and is the least malleable. Here, the allegory is simple—the creature is the iron, the glowing consciousness is the fire, the impinging 'Gunas' is the blow of the hammer, and the Atma is the iron smith.

The wheel of the potter moulds the clay into various shapes, but the driving force of the wheel is the potter. Similarly, the three 'Gunas' mould the characteristic of the creature, but the Atma is the authority, the potter in this allegory, who drives the three 'Gunas'. Just as the potter is not the wheel, the Atma is not affected by the three 'Gunas', it is just an instrument, an implement to shape the character of the creature. Again, even as a wheel is needed by a potter to give shape to a shapeless clod of clay, the Atma needs the three Gunas to mould the characters of the creatures that constitute this creation.

And important point to note here is that 'Ahankar' (ego, false pride, arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy and the sense of 'I') is the root cause of demoting even the most exalted of souls to an existence equivalent to that of an animal. This is stressed in Jabalupanishad of Sam Veda tradition which stresses that 'Isha' or the supreme Lord of creation had to become a 'Pashupati', Lord of animals, just because Ahankar cast its dark shadow on him. An exalted soul too becomes demoted as an animal if he has Ahankar in him.

The concept that 'I' is the body and not the 'pure conscious soul' leads to ignorance-based ego (Ahanakar). The constant concept of I vis-à-vis the body and this world leads to the sense of possessiveness in the creature. 'Pure consciousness' mired by ego becomes 'a conditioned consciousness' and fails to remain pure. This is why ego (Ahankar) has been likened to a minister of the king. It directs and regulates the actions of the consciousness which, under its influence, loses its independence. This 'conditioned consciousness'—working through the mind-intellect-ego combine is called, inter-alia, 'Chitta'. The word also means memory. Hence this memory acts as a referral library for the intellect. The latter falls back on it and rely on it whenever it is in doubt. The quality of books in the library guides the student; similarly, the quality of inherent tendencies stored in the library of Chitta directly affects the inputs of the intellect, and through it, the mind and successively down the hierarchy to the body and its organs of perception and action.

Although the soul has nothing to do with this command chain, but for all practical purposes the Atma/soul is deemed responsible for it because of its sovereign nature. So, the sincere seeker/aspirant should delineate this conscious from the rest of the chain and break the nexus between them so as to allow the glory of the pure consciousness of the soul to shine through like the splendorous sun breaking through from behind a curtain of clouds. It is like removing the various veils or covers from around the candle so that its light shines through the darkness of the room and illuminates all the corners of it.

How the three Gunas were used by Brahm to create this world has been beautifully described in Paingalo-panishad, 1/7 and 2/3. Canto 2, verse no. 3 describes how Sata and Raja were used, while Canto 1, verse no. 7 narrates the use of Tama. The concept of Gunas affecting the Atma has been elaborately dealt with in various Upanishads, for example the Maitrayanyu Upanishad, 1/11, 2/5, 3/5, etc. of the Sam Veda tradition.

Besides the three primary Gunas, we have six other Gunas as follows—(i) Sham (having self restraint and control; having peace, tranquility, serenity and quietness; being able to suppress desires, yearnings and natural instincts and impulses); Dam (tolerance, forbearance, fortitude); (iii) Upriti (renunciation, detachment, dispassion, indifference and non-involvement); (iv) Titksha (endurance, patience, fortitude, sufferance, equanimity); (v) Samadhan (solution, answer, lack of confusion or doubts, clarity of thoughts and conception); and (vi) Shraddha (having faith, belief, conviction, reverence and devotion).

⁵This is like the case of a building where its physical structure is determined by the physical grosser dimension of the construction materials used in its construction, such as bricks, steel, cement, sand, mortar, wood, iron, the paint used to colour it etc. Besides this, there is a subtle dimension of construction that depends upon the quality and not the quantity of these materials. Together they determine not only the exterior façade, the physical shape and presentation of this building but its inherent strength and quality. Then other factors come into play, such as the intention for which it was made and how actually it is being used, how it is looked after, who lives in it, how does it effect the surrounding landscape, what general ambience it has, whether it is foreboding and awe-inspiring or is welcoming and inviting, whether it is airy, lighted and comfortable or not, and such other small and big things. These are its hidden subtler qualities.

Likewise, the basic ingredients used at the time of conception of the creature in the cosmic egg, i.e. the ratio of the basic Gunas and the proportion of different elements would determine how each creature would become a unique sample even as no two buildings can ever be exactly the same in the true sense, for subtle variations are sure to creep in because of the nature of its independent construction work. That is also the reason why no two creatures are alike.]

“Verse no. 11 = That inherently pure, uncorrupted, supreme and transcendental Atma known as Parmatma, when it allowed itself to be submerged in or affected by such worldly notions as having Sukha and Dukha (i.e. when the Atma began to feel happy and sorrowful as a result of it erroneously identifying itself with the gross body and the material world which tossed it between the emotions of having elation and joy on the one hand, and threw it into the pit of distress and dismay, inflicting untold miseries to it on the other hand) it began to be called a Jiva Atma. This is how the Parmatma, the Supreme Being, came to be known as the Jiva, the living being. [The word ‘Jiva’ literally means something that is alive, that lives, whereas Parmatma means the supreme Atma, the supreme consciousness. The former word in practice refers to all the living beings in this creation, including plants and animals, while the latter word refers to the Lord of creation, the God of all the gods.] (11).

[Note—The genesis of creation described here in very brief is elaborately explained elsewhere in the Upanishads, such as in the following ones--(a) Rig Veda tradition—Aiteriyo-panishad; Mudgalo-pansishad, Canto 2-4; (b) Sam Veda tradition—Chandogyo-pansishad, Canto 3, Section 19; Canto 4, Section 17, verse nos. 1-3; Canto 6, Section 2-10; (c) Shukla Yajur Veda tradition—Trishikhi Brahmin, Canto 1; Painglo-pansishad, in its Canto 1 and Canto 2, verse no. 1-10; Subalo-pansishad, Canto 1-2; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 1-2, 4-5; Canto 6, Brahman 4; (d) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Shwetashwetar Upanishad, Canto 4; Taittiriyo-pansishad, Valli (Canto) 2, Anuvak (sub-canto) 2 and 6.]”

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5. (f) The Yogshikha Upanishad:--

**(Canto 1, verse nos. 8-12; Canto 3, verse nos. 4-11;
And Canto 6, verse nos. 58-61, 70)**

Canto 1, verse nos. 8-12

8. [This verse describes the initial phases of creation. Refer also to Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 9.]

In that neutral cosmic ethereal entity which primarily had no sign of activity, there appeared some form of subtle and almost imperceptible wave-like movement as it is usually seen in the movement of air.

[When the static air begins to move, it is so subtle and soft that it almost passes notice until the time it gathers sufficient energy and speed to be felt by the skin as breeze. No one can actually ‘see’ the waves in the air, but it is an undeniable fact of science that sound travels from one point to the other point in the form of waves in air. When these waves gather speed, we can actually hear their movements in the form of a howl of wind blowing across our ears, and we can actually feel its movement against our faces.]

The next thing to happen was the creation of ‘Ahankar’, i.e. the subtle element that marks such traits as having a sense of pride, ego and haughtiness that are hidden in the bosom of the creature and influence his character.

[It should be noted here that Ahankar is also one of the four components that make up the inner self or the Antahakaran of all living beings or Jiva. Refer Shaarirako-panishad, verse no. 4 of Krishna Yajur Veda.]

Then came into being a Pinda or an egg-like entity (the cosmic embryo) consisting of five primary subtler elements (such as the earth, water, fire, air and sky), and enclosed by the shell of grosser elements (such as blood, flesh, bones, marrow, veins and nerves etc.)¹.

Since there was a definitive shape and structure of this cosmic egg, however invisible and subtle it was, it was bound to have certain Gunas, or virtues and qualities, which were characteristic to it, and which would determine the unique nature, personality

and character of the would-be offspring that would emerge from this cosmic egg in due course². (8).

[Note—Refer Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 10, 12-13.

²These Gunas are three in number, such as Sata, Raja and Tama.]

9. When this happened, the supreme primary entity that primarily had been neutral and without any attributes tainting its inherently immaculate nature and pristine pure character now got tainted and was influenced by so many factors that it got deluded into thinking that it is assumed a form with certain Gunas or attributes and qualities (as described in verse no. 8 above). It began to think that something has come into being with a definite character and attribute.

What was that which came into being? It was an egg inside which there was an embryo with a certain shape and form and texture (as described in verse no. 8), and it was surrounded by a shell. This embryo later hatched into a living being or creature with a body. So the supreme Brahm or Parmatma began to identify himself as a Jiva with a gross body.

[The shell of the cosmic egg transformed into the grosser protective layer of the skin, flesh and bones of the newly born Jiva or the living creature, and the embryo itself formed this Jiva. Naturally therefore, all the ingredients that helped give the embryo its shape and identity transferred themselves into the new Jiva. How the elements shaped the body of the Jiva have been clearly described in Sharrirako-panishad, verse nos. 1-13.]

Hence, the very thought of the Parmatma, the Supreme Being or Brahm, that he has got such and such qualities or possesses certain attributes made him believe that he was a Jiva, the living being. Otherwise, the Parmatma is supreme and transcendental, remaining free from any limitations and definitions that are artificially created when some or the other attribute or quality is assigned to any given entity. The Parmatma is beyond the purview of any kind of definition and attribute which act like taints upon his immaculate nature.

[Something that is perfect and absolute, that is infinite, indescribable and beyond comprehension would be scarred by being delineated, encased and limited if one were to assign certain specific attributes to it because each quality or attribute has its inherent limitations and gives a fixed idea of what it means, and would therefore imply that the entity under study is limited by this particular attribute, that the attribute in question defines it and draws a line around it, that this particular attribute is its defining quality which dominates its character and is more important than the other qualities. This sort of limits something that is limitless; it sort of limits something within certain definitions and criterions. For instance, if we say that there is light in the room, then the question arises what type of light is it, what is its intensity and colour, what is the source, was there darkness before it, is it sufficient etc. Suppose one says that the Supreme Being is all-knowing, then the question arises why is this particular quality being highlighted? Does it mean that the Supreme Being's main quality is being all-knowing and the other qualities are of lesser significance? If we say the ocean is salty then someone would say 'how salty'? In short, something that cannot be defined is best left alone as being indefinable, and no specific attributes ought to be assigned to it because this would be tantamount to imposing limitations on it and drawing a defining parameter wall around it] (9).

[Note—The very fact that the Parmatma lost his neutrality and began to think in terms of possessing the three Gunas (Sata, Raja and Tama), or having a gross body that lives in this world and interacts with it, a body that can enjoy or suffer and that does deeds and expects results from such deeds, or that the world actually exists at all inspite of being omniscient and all-knowing about the truth of creation, and so on and so forth, it is natural that he fell from his exalted stature of being ‘supreme’. It is then that this Parmatma becomes a Jiva or an ordinary living being. Conversely, if the Jiva realises the truth and disassociates himself from the delusions created by this world and the body, if he is able to overcome the various taints and imperfections typical of this life and as enumerated in the Upanishads, then it is natural that such a Jiva rises to the exalted stature of being a Parmatma. In brief, when the Atma is engrossed in the world and its accompanying delusions, it is called a Jiva, and if it is able to realise its true nature by ‘self-realisation’ it elevates itself to the exalted stature of a Parmatma.]

10-11. [These two verses list the numerous faults and shortcomings in the character and mental setup of the creature which prevents the latter from becoming one like the supreme Lord of creation because they act as drags on his spiritual upliftment, pulling the individual’s soul towards this mundane world rather than allowing it to go higher to reach for the sky of spiritual achievement.]

Some of the inherent faults, shortcomings, imperfections and drawbacks that mire the creature’s spiritual progress and pull him down from reaching the high of spiritual achievement that would make him equivalent to the supreme Soul of creation are the following—Kaam (worldly desires, lust, passions etc. and the attending greed, yearnings and aspirations that they create in their wake), Krodh (anger, indignation, wrathfulness and a sense of vengeance when desired results are not obtained and aspirations are not fulfilled), Bhaye (fear, consternation and perplexities arising out of uncertainties, confusions and other factors such as fear from death and enemy, fear of failure and its attending shame, fear of sufferings of the body due to old age and diseases etc.), Moha (delusions that create a sense of attachment, infatuation and belonging to this material world and attractions for the illusive charms that its sense objects offer, along with their sensual pleasures and comforts), Lobha (greed, rapacity and yearnings), Mada (arrogance, false pride, hypocrisy and haughtiness), Raja (the quality of remaining engrossed in this world of material objects, to think that one is the doer of deeds and therefore is entitled to the rewards of these deeds etc.), the problems associated with the cycle of Janma and Mrityu (birth and death), Kaarpanya or Kripantaa (to be miserly and pinch-fisted, shallow-hearted and small-minded, frugal, illiberal, niggardly, avaricious, stingy), Shok (grief, sorrows, miseries and agonies of all kinds), Standra (sleepiness, lethargy, indolence, drowsiness, sluggishness and lack of alertness especially when doing some important or dangerous work requiring concentration of mind, vigilance and alertness of the faculties), Kshudha (hunger) and Pipasa (thirst) [10],-----

-----Tirshnaa (thirst for acquiring and enjoying worldly things and desire for self gratification; greed, avarice and rapacity for the material world and its sense objects and their enjoyments), Lajja (shame at doing something dishonourable and ignominious) and its attendant fear of losing face, self respect, dignity and position in society, all sorts of Dukha and Vishaad (sorrows, miseries, agonies, grieving, lamentations, feeling of gloom and guilt, melancholy, sadness, depression, dejection, low-spirited etc.), and Harsh (the opposite of Dukha and Vishaad; the feeling of elation, happiness, joy, ecstasy and exhilaration; to feel glad, cheerful and joyous).

These are the shortcomings or imperfections that cast their shadow on the otherwise immaculate and perfect Atma of the creature, thereby miring it in a number of unwarranted problems and separating it from its pure nature. Until the creature is freed from their clutches or tainting effects, he cannot ever hope to become as pure as the Shiva, i.e. the creature cannot attain his true primary nature which is pristine pure, uncorrupt, truthful, auspicious, neutral and beautiful like the form of Shiva [11]. (10-11).

[Note—These two verses list 19 faults that mire the creature's Atma.]

12. Therefore it is essential to get rid of these faults and destroy them. Now I shall tell you the ways to do so. Some say that only Gyan (knowledge) is the proper instrument to effect this riddance. But simply Gyan is not sufficient to do so; it cannot alone provide the mystical powers necessary to achieve success in self-realisation and understanding the pure nature of the pure conscious Atma (12).

[Note—Refer also to verse no. 14 of the Yogtattva Upanishad.]

Canto 3, verse no. 4-11

4. [The earlier verses had dealt with the Naad that was heard by the ascetic while the mind was fixed in the Mooladhar Chakra. Now the attention shifts to the heart region where the Hridaya Chakra or the Anahat Chakra is located.]

The roaring sound heard in the region of the heart is like the distant thundering and reverberating rumble of the clouds. Oh Brahma! The divine Shakti located here is called 'Madhyama' or the one that is located in the middle (because the heart is located in the central part of the body and mid way between the Mooladhar Chakra at the bottom and the Brahm Randhra Chakra or Sahasrar Chakra at the top of the head) (4).

5-6. [Verse nos. 5-10 describe how a man is enabled to speak.]

This Shakti derives its powers from the Pran Vayu (breath). [This is because the breath draws in fresh air and oxidises the blood. The breath also keeps the heart beating as is evident from the fact that the heart immediately stops beating if the breath is stopped as it happens during death by suffocation.]

This power of breath enables a person to speak and thereby enable this Shakti (the Madhyama Shakti of the heart or Anahat Chakra) to move out of the body by the way of the mouth (in the form of the spoken word) and spread its wings to reach another person in the form of the energy of the sound that translates into the word heard by him.

This Shakti which moves out from the mouth in the form of sound or the spoken words to be transferred to another person in the form of words heard by him, is called 'Vaikhari'.

While doing so, i.e. while spreading out to reach other places, it acts like the tree which gives out new shoots and spreads out its branches along with the leaves and flowers and fruits to reach a wider area much away from the location of its roots. When the dynamic energy of the cosmic Naad passes through the cavity of the mouth and rubs against its walls and fine-tuned by the muscles of the tongue when the vital forces of life called Pran (breath) are exhaled through the open mouth, its frequencies undergo certain

changes so much so that now they come within audible range and can be heard as the spoken word. The tongue's flexible muscles help to make the jumble of meaningless sounds into meaningful words that are clearly articulate and understandable [5].

This produces various genres of sound from which arise all the alphabets of the language—from the first letter 'A' (as in *alloy*) of the Sanskrit alphabet to the last letter 'Ha' (as in *hung*).

Combination of letters produce words, and combination of words produce phrases, sentences and paragraphs, and their numerous spin-offs such as poetry and stanzas [6]. (5-6).

[Note—These two verses briefly describe the genesis of the spoken language. See verse nos. 7-9 also below.]

7. All the Mantras, all the Vedas and other scriptures, all the Purans and numerous other narratives and poetical compositions, all the uncountable dialects and languages in existence—they are all indeed a manifestation of the Vakya or the word which is a manifestation of the cosmic dynamic energy called Shakti in its second form known as 'Vaikhari'. The dynamo that powers this Shakti is the beating heart—or the activated Hridaya Chakra because as soon as the heart stops to beat no one can speak a word (7).

8. All the seven basic sounds of classical music, called the 'Swars' (Sa, Re, Ga Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni) as well as all the various Gathas (narrative compositions that were transmitted orally by being rendered into poetry) are manifestation of Naad¹.

Goddess Saraswati, the patron goddess of speech, learning and wisdom, who resides in the mouth of all living beings (and enables them to speak in their own tongue or language), is indeed a manifestation of Naad.

[That is why Saraswati is depicted in iconography as holding a Veena, the Indian lute, as a symbol of her singing prowess. Since singing needs a finer tuned voice, special vocal skills and expert command over the language and its finer nuances, and also because the verses have to be memorized by heart to be sung without break as compared to the simple and routine exercise of daily talking or speaking, the most appropriate depiction of the eclectic nature of the cosmic Naad is not as simple words spoken in daily routine life but as the inherent music of classical and melodious singing. This is also why in the Upanishads that describe Naad, it is likened to the cosmic 'music' heard by the ascetic while he is submerged deep in meditation.] (8).

[Note--¹This is because Naad incorporates all known genres of sound. There is no sound that is not incorporated in Naad. Refer Naad Bindu and Aksha-maliko Upanishads of Rig Veda tradition as well as Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 2-37 and Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 80 of the Sam Veda tradition in this context of the sound produced by Naad.

Now let us briefly analyse how the uniform sound of the Naad is broken up into letters and forms what is called speech. When the exhaled breath rubs against the muscles of the vocal cords, it produces a sound resembling the cosmic homogenous sound called the Naad. But as it happens, the angle at which the breath rubs against these vocal cords and the flexible muscles of the tongue help to break up the wavelength of this homogenous sound wave into many waves of differing wavelength and frequencies, thereby creating sound of different tones, notes and pitches. These sound waves are

modulated and fine-tuned in such a way that they are interpreted by the brain of the hearer as letters, which in turn form intelligent words and sentences. The Swars are the basic or primary form in which the Naad is broken into.

It ought to be noted here that the basic Swars or tones and notes of music are ‘seven’ in number and the colours in the sunlight are also ‘seven’; there is a natural and obvious correlation between them which leads us to a very interesting analogy. Just like the sunlight is scattered into seven basic and primary colours—viz. violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red when it is scattered by the water molecules in the earth’s atmosphere during and after rainfall into seven wavelengths resulting in the formation of the rainbow, as well as when white light breaks up into seven colours when it passes through a transparent glass prism, the uniform sound of the Naad breaks up into waves of seven wavelengths or frequencies which are picked up by the brain as seven Swars—viz. Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni. This is ‘music’, but when the same theory is extended further we can imagine how the sounds of the vowels, consonants and sibilant letters are formed.

To understand how this comes about, we can draw on the example of light in physics and recall the physical phenomenon called the ‘Raman Effect’ in which the monochromatic light is further scattered to produce additional lines in the spectrum when a beam of light is further scattered by a transparent material medium. The ‘Raman Effect’ shows how the energy and hence the wavelength or the frequency of the light falling upon a suitable molecule is ‘modified and modulated according to the combined effect of the basic energy of the molecule as well as the energy of the incident light during the process of light transmission through this medium’; it is because there is an exchange of energy either way between the incident light and the molecules of the medium through which it is being transmitted. Therefore the modification or modulation is surely characteristic of the molecule of which the medium is made up of as much as it is on the energy of the incident light.

In the present context we can now easily visualise how the sound waves of different wavelengths or frequencies are created and why a single basic sound-form can be further broken up and fine-tuned to form the different letters of the same group of vowels and consonants of the Sanskrit language. The modulation and modification is done by the vocal cords in close concert with the tongue and the muscles of the mouth cavity which have been designed and constructed by Mother Nature with expert sense of acoustics in mind. Different subtle characteristics and temperaments of the speaker which are controlled by numerous elements which determine an individual’s uniqueness, such as his different Gunas (inherent virtues and qualities of which there are three main ones—viz. Sata, Raja and Tama), the different Vrittis and Vasanas (mental tendencies, natural temperaments, passions, desires and habits), Ahankar (ego, self-pride), Mana (natural inclination and state of the mind and heart), and so many other incidental factors that determine his personality, outlook, emotions, sentiments, state of the mind and thought processes come into play to decide how the same wavelength or frequency of sound that creates a given letter, and hence the spoken language, is modulated and modified by different individuals to create different impressions of the meaning of the same word. It shows how the same word of the same language is spoken differently by different people, and how it is transformed to mean different things to different people.]

9. When the Pran Vayu (the vital winds of the body, especially the breath and the one which infuses life and vitality in the body) is heated and activated by the subtle energy present inside the body, especially the one known as Madhyama (see verse no. 4 above), it transforms or metamorphoses into sounds revealed in the form of words, sentences and

paragraphs during its movement inside and outside the body (as narrated in verse nos. 5-6 above)¹ (9).

[Note--¹The sound is produced when the exhaled air vibrates the vocal cords in the throat. So a combination of factors come into play here—viz. the movement and speed of the air moving in the outwards direction through the mouth, the health and flexibility of the muscles of the throat and the vocal cords, the constriction that is created in order to make the air rub against the cords with the desired angle and force etc. The Pran wind is aided by the Apan wind also as these sounds are produced in the mouth and not in the nose.

It is to be noted here that the Madhyama Shakti has transformed itself as Vaikhari Shakti in the mouth. Earlier the Pran Vayu was inhaled and exhaled through the nose when the mouth was shut and the man was silent during Pranayam. To speak, this same Pran Vayu changes its path and now it moves through the mouth, thereby activating this Vaikhari Shakti latently present there but hitherto lying dormant. The Apan wind is known to move down in the body, and hence it creates a sucking action of air in the mouth when it is opened to speak. This is like the filling on an iron-smith's bellows. The 'inhaled' breath is the Apan wind which fires the oven present in the lower end of the body—i.e. the Mooladhar Chakra, to arouse its 'Pashyanti Shakti' (described in verse no. 3). The energy then leaps up and powers the dynamo of the heart—i.e. it activates the Hridaya Chakra, and through it the 'Vaikhari Shakti' (described in verse nos. 5-6). The latter produces 'sound'. The upward pressure exerted by the compressed winds in the body is the cause of the activation of this Shakti. Since air that is being expelled with force through the cavities of the mouth and the throat to produce a sound which is fine-tuned by the tongue into articulate words is located in the upper part of the body, this aspect of vital wind that is associated with speech is called Pran.

In short, that aspect of the Pran Vayu that is inhaled during the time the mouth is open while one speaks is called Apan, and the Pran Vayu that is exhaled and which actually produces the sound is called Pran. The Apan stokes the fire of life in the body from below like the fire present in the oven below the grate, while the Pran is the heated and activated wind that moves up in the oven and makes a hissing and rasping sound as it rushes up and out of the mouth of the oven. This is also why we cannot speak while drawing in air but only when it is expelled from the body—because the wind responsible for speech is Pran and not Apan.

But it must be noted that both these two vital winds work in close cooperation with each other and do not oppose. No one can speak if there is no energy in the body to do so, and the Apan wind is responsible for digestion of food in the intestines so that the body is properly nourished and energized. Besides this point, the Pran wind would depend upon the Apan wind to be honoured as the producer of vocal sound because it is the Apan wind which heats up the body from below and helps to build up sufficient pressure on the lungs so that the air is expelled with enough force and pressure to produce sound when it ruffles or rubs against the vocal cords in the throat.

In a similar vein, the Pran wind keeps the body alive and active because no one can live for a second if the breathing stops, and the dead body would have no use for the Apan wind located in the intestines and the lower part of the body. Thus we observe that body these two winds play hand-in-hand and are like the two wheels of the chariot to make life meaningful and livable for the man.]

10. When a self-realised ascetic understands that his speech (or whatever words are spoken by him) is nothing but a revelation of the stupendous powers of his own Atma (pure consciousness) in the form of the Shakti (the subtle energy) called Bhaikari that has

revealed itself as the faculty of speech and the spoken word, he is blessed by Goddess Saraswati (the patron goddess of this energy and its revelation as speech) so much so that whatever he utters becomes a reality. None of his words go in vain; they are truthful and bear fruit (10).

11. Since Saraswati is the patron goddess of knowledge and wisdom besides being the goddess of speech, it follows that such an ascetic (as described in previous verses) is himself a creator of the Vedas, various scriptures and Purans (ancient histories)¹.

The Bindu and Naad² are like the Moon and the Sun³, or like the Agni (fire) and the Vayu (wind)⁴ respectively.

Hence, a spiritual aspirant who has the grand ability to bear both these two primary forces of creation can have the required prowess, aptitude and skills to become a symbolic creator of the Vedas, Purans and other scriptures⁵ (11).

[Note—¹In other words, an ascetic who has realised the true divine potential of his Atma is blessed with such mystical powers that he need not study the various scriptures separately to become learned and wise, for all the eclectic virtues that are purported and implied in the teaching of the scriptures in the form of their various tenets, maxims and axioms automatically come to him on their own.

Another interpretation would be this—the Atma is Brahm manifested, and since all the scriptures are creations of Brahm in the form of divine ethereal words that are eternal and imperishable, and this Atma is the one which makes the ascetic speak these words by harnessing the Vaikhari Shakti, it follows that the words spoken by the ascetic are the words of wisdom spoken by none else but Brahm. That ‘Shakti’ aspect of Brahm which reveals itself in the form of words of wisdom is personified in the form of the Goddess Saraswati.

²The Bindu means a ‘point-source’, and Naad refers to the ‘un-manifest cosmic energy in the form of sound’ that radiated out in the cosmic ether from this point-source. Therefore, the Bindu would refer to the passive Brahm and the Naad would mean in this context the dynamic and active energy of this Brahm radiating out from this point-source to all the directions of creation much like the rays of the sun radiating out from its disc to illuminate the vast realm of this world. Refer note to verse no. 3 of the present Canto 3 also.

²The Moon is a passive source of light because it simply reflects the light of the Sun falling on it, and hence the active source of light is the Sun. Had there been no Sun, the Moon would not show its light. In the context of Brahm and creation this analogy applies most aptly. The stupendous and astounding powers that Brahm inherently possesses are highlighted in the context of the most fascinating, majestic and magnificently wondrous world it has created using its own energy called Shakti. Had this creation not been in existence, the powers of Brahm would have remained unknown and un-revealed; it would not have come to the fore.

In other words, the active principle of Brahm is revealed in the form of the Shakti which resembles the grand Sun in the sky—brilliant, splendorous, potent and fiery in its form, whilst the principal itself is passive and reflected in its own glory like the Moon shining in the glory of the Sun. That is why Brahm is said to be personified grand virtues of peace, tranquility, serenity and calmness represented by the Moon, while Shakti is a personification of energy, heat, vigour, vitality and dynamism symbolised by the Sun.

³The same analogy applies to the fire and wind elements in this context. Since the Bindu is regarded as the Shakti principle of Brahm in Tantra literature because it is this principal point from where the primary form of active and dynamic Brahm started to

reveal its self in the form of Naad, it is likened to the 'fire element'. The Naad itself is sound and the latter needs the medium of ether to travel as waves and spread in all the directions. Therefore, Naad is likened to the 'wind element'.

⁵In other words, an ascetic who realises that he is Brahm personified as his subtle Atma or pure consciousness residing inside his inner self on the one hand, and as the various functions that this Brahm or Atma performs with the help of the gross body, one of which is the speech or the spoken word on the other hand, he is said to be an enlightened and wise ascetic. Since scriptures are synonymous with wisdom, erudition, eclectic knowledge and enlightenment, such an ascetic is deemed to be an expert in them, a fact metaphorically emphasised by saying that he can create these scriptures.]

Canto 6, verse nos. 58-61, 70

58. The tendency of the mind and its various faculties to remain ever restless, agile, freakish, volatile, fickle and unsteady is said to be the cause of this deluding world to come into existence, while the state when this mind becomes focused, steady, peaceful and calm is tantamount to obtaining Moksha (liberation from this entrapping world and its accompanying delusions and attendant miseries).

Hence, one should strive to steady and calm his mind and its various faculties by employing all the strength at his disposal as well as all the power of wisdom and intelligence that he possesses (58).

59. It is the sub-conscious mind and its ability to imagine and conceive things that has not only created this world of imaginary material things and all sorts of delusory perceptions but also expands this imaginary and deluding world so that it acquires an endless dimension.

Obviously, if this sub-conscious mind and its magnificent ability to imagine and remember imaginary things are done away with, the world would automatically cease to exist or matter at all. Therefore, all spiritual aspirants are expected to decimate the role of this tricky mind in their spiritual pursuit (because if they allow the mind to let it have its way then they are sure to waver and fall on the wayside) (59).

60. The Mana (the mind and its thoughts) is the progenitor of the notion of Ahankar (ego, pride and arrogance). The mind which is conditioned by the sense of ego and pride assumes the dimension of the sky, spreading its tentacles in every direction (i.e. it becomes a huge and insurmountable obstacle in one's spiritual path; no matter what effort the spiritual aspirant makes his ego and pride would put a spanner in the wheel of his progress)¹.

The deluding world and its traps are the maverick creation of this mind corrupted by the element of Ahankar².

The wise ascetic must understand that this Mana is not his Atma or his pure 'self'.

The Atma is much superior to the Mana; they are not only distinct from one another but the Atma is the Lord of the Mana and it is not the other way round³ (60).

[Note—¹An example would help to explain the implication of this statement. A rich man thinks that he is superior to others and would not like to sit on the floor with them. He would be proud of his worldly possessions that he thinks that he has produced by his own

efforts or got as inheritance as a reward of his past good deeds and therefore has the right over them. He never would like to forgo his worldly material possessions and bargain them for the difficult life of a spiritual aspirant, such as leading an austere life and renouncing all material comforts of the world. Similarly a haughty scholar would never acknowledge that his knowledge is limited and so would steadfastly ignore good advice or seek more knowledge. This is because the element of Ahankar puts its leg in and prevents the wheel of wisdom and sanity from moving the chariot of unpretentious simplicity and humility—the hallmarks of spiritualism—ahead.

²It is to be noted that when Brahm had decided to create this world of unimaginable dimensions, the first thing that came into being was ‘Ahankar’, and the next was ‘Maya’. That is, as soon as the immaculate and eternally pure Brahm thought that he has the power to do something as grand as starting the process of creation, the element of ‘self pride’ and ‘ego’ corrupted him. No sooner had this happened than the element of ‘delusions’ swamped him and overcame him from all the sides so much so that Brahm was literally swept of his feet and got himself sucked in the quagmire of the world that he himself had created. He was no longer free to relax and do meditation, for now he had to worry about the sustenance and protection of the world he had created himself.

Not only this, he saw that his off springs started petty quarrels and indulged in squabbling, robbing the peace and tranquility that Brahm had been enjoying before this creation had come into being. So he decided to wind up the game, and this resulted in the conclusion of one phase of creation. But this notorious ‘Ahankar’ element of Brahm did not let him live in peace—for he could not digest the fact that he could not control his off springs and had to punish them by winding up the whole drama altogether. So he decided to give it another try and set out to create the second round of creation. And the cycle continued.

This should act as a beacon of warning for the spiritual aspirant—if this Ahankar is powerful enough that it did not even spare the almighty Brahm from its clutches and drew him in its vice like grip, what chance does an ordinary man has to stand against it? So he should endeavour to nip the bud before it blooms into a flower by cutting off the cause of this world altogether—i.e. to conquer, to vanquish and completely eliminate the mind and crush its maverick tricks. This would do away with Ahankar and also with the Maya that follows in its wake.

³That is, the spiritual aspirant should not despair at the worrying state of the Mana and be assured that though the mind has so many tainting scars influencing its working, it does not mean that the ascetic himself is impure and corrupt because his ‘true and pure self’ is the consciousness known as the Atma present in his heart which is a complete independent entity and has nothing to do with the Mana. So when it is said that he should conquer the Mana, it wouldn’t harm his own ‘self’ in the least.]

61. It is the Mana (here referring to the mind and heart combine) that does deeds and gets involved in sins and wickedness.

[The gross body is the entity that actually does the physical deed, but it does so at the instructions of the mind. The heart is the seat of emotions, so when the heart is involved in any deed, the creature becomes fully engrossed in it. Both the mind and heart play equal role in making the creature involved in any deed—the mind would control his body and divert his attention to the deed to be done, while the heart would make him endeared to the deed, enjoy it and therefore stick to it for a prolonged periods without getting fed up or weary of it. In other words, when it is said that one is fully engrossed or involved in any deed, it is implied that his mind and heart are both involved in the process. Now, the world is a charming proposition and when the mind and heart get to

taste its sweet pill, they are so enamoured by it that they would go to any length to acquire its proximity and enjoy the comforts and pleasures that it has to offer. In this pursuit, they would compel the creature to commit horrendous sins and wicked deeds.]

If the Mana abandons its natural inclinations and habits (by becoming steady and focused on the spiritual path that it ought to follow instead of indulging ceaselessly in this world), there would be no such thing as sin or wickedness on the one hand, and auspiciousness and righteousness on the other.

[That is, as soon as the wise aspirant realises the fact that all the problems he faces in his spiritual path are caused by the Mana, he would immediately distance himself from the latter and the deeds done by the body under the instructions of the Mana. When this eclectic state of existence is actually achieved by the Atma which however is the truthful identity of the man doing the deed, he would not be bothered whether the deeds are good or bad, whether they are auspicious or inauspicious. Instead, there would be complete sense of equanimity and evenness in the way he treats this world and deals with it.] (61).

70. The potentials and powers of the Mana (mind) are similar to the majestic glories of such (visible) entities as the sun and the moon, while its ability to see and perceive is like the stupendous glory of the fire on display.

On the other hand, the Trinity Gods such as Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, nourisher and protector of the creation, and Shiva the concluder of creation, are merely a fraction or aspect of the (invisible) Bindu and Naad.

[In other words, the Mana is the most striking and forceful visible depiction of the astoundingly magnificent potentials of the supreme Brahm even as the sun and the moon in the sky and the fire on the earth showcase Brahm's glorious, overriding and unmatched cosmic authority and powers having amazing potentials and far-reaching effects. On the other hand, the Trinity Gods are not visible in their presence like the sun, the moon and the fire. They are invisible and more abstract than the sun, moon and fire which every living being is able to see for himself first hand. So, the latter (the sun, moon and fire) are a visible and comparatively grosser manifestations of the grand powers, potentials and authority of Brahm as compared to the former (the Trinity Gods which are more subtle and sublime manifestations of Brahm). Since this visible gross world is a creation of the mind, the latter is compared to the other visible manifestations of Brahm such as the sun, the moon and the fire.] (70).

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5. (g)

The Shaarirak Upanishad:--**(Verse nos. 1-6, 16-20)**

1. [This verse describes the very primary elements or units from which the creation is made, and how they transformed themselves into the different components of the creature's gross body. Refer verse no. 5-6 of this Upanishad below. Besides this Upanishad, there is another Upanishad belonging to the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, viz. the Paingal Upanishad which narrates almost identical concepts in its Canto 2.]

OM salutations! This gross body of the creature is a combination of the five basic elements in creation called the 'Pancha Mahabhuts', such as earth etc. (the others being water, fire, air and sky)¹.

The solid, thicker, denser and heavier part of the body is made up of the earth element. [For example, the bones, skin, nails, hairs etc.]

The fluid part is made up of the water element. [For example, blood, lymph, semen, mucous, urine, semi-solid stool etc.] The heat and warmth in the living body is the fire element. [A dead body is ice-cold, and since the fire element is missing in such a body, it cannot live and is deemed to be lifeless.]

The constant movement and restlessness that is so typical of any living organism is a manifestation of the air or wind element. [This movement may not be externally visible, but is always there in some form or the other. For example, the heart continues to beat and the blood flows uninterruptedly even while a man sleeps; all the internal organs such as the kidneys, lungs, intestines, brain etc. continue to function during this state though externally there is no activity. A man breathes continuously though 'breath' cannot be visibly seen. Breath is nothing but the air element in its life-giving role. The Trishkhi Brahmin Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 8 says that the movement of the consciousness inside the body is through the different Naadis or ducts such as nerves, veins and the like. This consciousness is metaphorically represented by the different 'Gods' that are said to moving in these Naadis and controlling their respective functioning. These Gods who personifies various forces of Nature are also metaphors for the Pran's different forms because they regulate life in a living body. In other words, the 'consciousness' and 'Pran' or the wind element are synonymous with each other and together are equally responsible to keep the body alive. The body of any living being cannot survive without either of them. Even immobile forms of living creation such a plants continue their activities day and night without resting for a moment. The importance of air for the life can be proved by keeping someone in a vacuum—sure enough he would die immediately. In fact, life and movement are synonymous with each other; only a dead body shows no movement in the real sense. Similarly, life and air are also synonymous with each other.]

The hollow space present in the body in a very subtle and invisible form (such as the space between the organs and the inter-cellular space, and even the space inside the cell between its constituent parts, the pores on the skin, the hollow of the nostrils, the auditory canal, the hollow of the mouth and anus, the air passage of the lungs and the food passage of the digestive canal et al.) is made up of the sky or space element (1).

[Note—¹The five primary elements called the ‘Tattvas’ came into being at the very beginning of creation. The Tattvas are the primary or fundamental elements or units or dimensions or aspects of creation which act as the building blocks of creation, not only as its brickwork but also to decide the shape its exterior façade would take as well as the interior character and quality of the construction.

We have *primary elements* that were formed at the time of creation, and the *secondary elements* that developed later on as offshoots to the process of creation. Primarily there were five basic elements—such as the sky, air or wind, fire or energy, water and earth in increasing order of density or grossness. From them came the secondary elements. These latter vary according to the level and dynamics of creation one is dealing with in terms of metaphysics. These elements can be compared to the elements of material science of the modern world, such as the elements calcium, magnesium, potassium, selenium etc. which are heavier and grosser in nature as compared to other elements such as the gases oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, helium etc. which are lighter and subtler. Then there is carbon which is the base of an entire field of chemistry called organic chemistry, much like we have Atma in metaphysics, that in association with different other elements form a vast array of organic chemicals and material products of daily use. If carbon is compared to the basic unit called the Atma in metaphysics, then the other elements that combine with it are the various Gunas, Vikaars, Vasanas and Vrittis that surround this Atma to give rise to an uncountable number of creatures of different virtues, nature, temperaments, characters and personalities.

In this scenario, Brahm would be like the primary Atom which left to itself is neutral and inactive. It is only when certain changes take place in its core, such as the shift in the position of its electron or change in the number of its protons and electrons etc. that the chain of reaction starts that would ultimately result in not only producing newer elements that combine in mind-boggling permutations and combinations to create an endless array of material things, but also releasing energy in the process or absorbing matter from the surrounding atmosphere. At the cosmic level this is seen in exploding stars or formation of huge black-holes.

The Atma would be more like the atom of carbon which is at the heart of all organic compounds that exist in this world, while Brahm would be the primary form of the atom, i.e. the atom of the first element of the Periodic Table with atomic number 1, or even the nucleus of other heavier atoms of the higher elements of this Table from atomic number 2 onwards.]

2. [This verse describes the different organs of perception of the gross body and their functions. Refer verse no. 6. It ought to be noted that the Supreme Creator had delegated different duties to different organs so as to ensure optimum usage and that they do not overlap producing duplicity of effort which would be a colossal waste of energy and time from the macrocosmic perspective, but also to see that they do not clash with each other over jurisdiction and authority. This delineation of duties and functions were primary tool used by the Supreme Being to manage the huge structure of the living world. This is the first example we have of the theory of ‘delegation of authority’ in Nature. It ensured that the wheel of creation moves smoothly and continuously for ever. It is like the case of a chariot (representing the body) having five horses (representing the five organs of perceptions and actions). If the horses are kept in control by the charioteer (represented by the mind-intellect complex), the chariot moves ahead and reaches its destination in one piece, and the passenger (represented by the Atma or the pure conscious ‘self’) himself is secure, happy and fine. Otherwise not only would the chariot topple over but

the passenger would be mortally wounded! This analogy of the chariot has been beautifully cited and elucidated upon in Katho Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, Valli 3.]

The five sense organs of perception are called ‘Gyan Indris’, such as ears etc. (the others being eyes, nose, tongue and skin).

The ears represent the sky element; the ears are the manifestations of the sky element. [The ears have the function of hearing, but it can hear only if the sound reaches it. Sound would need open space and an ethereal medium to travel and reach the ear because it does so in the form of waves. That is why the ears turn towards the direction in the sky from where the sound comes. The ears are like the modern day radar that is made to turn and rotate in order to optimize the reception of sound. That is why we cannot hear anything if there is a solid obstruction between the origin of sound and the ears because it would obstruct the path of the movement of sound waves traveling in the ether present in the space of the sky between the origin point of the sound and the ear.]

The skin represents the air element; the skin is the manifestation of the air or wind element. [The skin has the function of feeling the sense of touch. When a soft breeze blows over our skin, it can immediately feel being subtly and softly massaged by the former. The excellent ability of the skin to exhibit the subtle sense of touching and feeling anything in its subtlest form is manifested when it can feel the air or wind blowing over it, because this air or wind is not physically seen but its presence nevertheless ‘felt and known’. Similarly, when a fire is burning fiercely, one gets scorched by its heat though one does not actually touch it. This happens because the hot air coming in from the fire touches the skin and makes it feel scorched and hot. This feeling and sensation is the exclusive domain of the skin, for the ears, eyes, nose and the tongue can’t do so. Their sphere of activity and functions are different from one another.]

The eyes represent the fire element; the eyes are the manifestations of the fire element. [The eye can see anything only if the latter is illuminated, or there is light in the general surrounding area; it cannot see anything in dark. The fire element has light as one of its integral characteristic feature—where there is a fire burning, there would be light. That is why a fire is lit in the forest to ward off wild animals because they are scared by its light and leaping flames. The fire element has heat and energy inherent in it too, and the eyes can perceive the existence of anything if the fire element manifests itself even in its non-visible form as heat and energy as is evident from modern day night-vision instruments such as night-vision goggles etc. which precisely exploit this phenomenon of the ability of the eye to perceive the existence of anything if there are subtle components of fire element present in the thing viewed. The infra-red rays that are emitted by anything not frigid cold are translated into vision by these specialised instruments. In the absence of the light in the visible spectrum, the eye utilizes the subtler components of fire, such as heat and energy and the infra-red rays emanated by anything that is warm or hot, to perceive things. Similarly, modern day weapons which have so-called smart electronic eyes can home on to their targets relying upon heat emanating from them.]

The tongue represents the water element; the tongue is the manifestation of the water element. [The tongue can taste anything only when the enzymes of taste present in the saliva dissolve the chemicals present in the food tasted. Suppose a piece of iron is put on the tongue. Would it enjoy its taste as much as it longs for a delicious sweet dish? This

is because the water element is not present in the solid piece of iron that can enable the enzymes of the saliva to taste iron like it would taste, say for example, a piece of dry fruit or a grain of rice which are also relatively hard as compared to cooked soft food. Even uncooked and raw food does not appeal to the tongue as much as properly cooked food for this precise reason—the chemicals of uncooked food do not sufficiently dissolve in water present in the saliva to interact with the enzymes of taste. Until the water has softened the food, the latter cannot be gulped; it would get stuck either in the mouth or in the throat. That is why of all the external organs of the body, it is the tongue that is the moistest and supple.]

The nose represents the earth element; the nose is the manifestation of the earth element. [The nose has the main function of smelling, and smell has its origin in anything that is gross and that has an affinity to the earth by preferring to be near it. This is evident from the fact that there is no smell in outer space; we smell things only when we land on the earth. Even on earth, places that are symbolic of life and fertility, such as green and moist areas rich in fauna and flora give out a fragrance, whether likable or not, but dry and parched areas of the same earth, such as arid deserts and snow covered mountains do not harbour smell. A garden is full of fragrances of flowers and the sweet aroma of fruits which spread over large areas in the surrounding place, even carried to far distances by the wind, but if we were to rise above the surface of the earth, say in a hot air balloon, the smells would not be smelt by us high up in the sky. In other words, smell has a direct affinity to earth and things that this earth harbours. That is why we have such terms as 'earthy smell', such as the one that comes out from earthen pots and mud houses. Wherever there is earth element, there would be a subtle and sublime 'smell' typical of life in all its forms.]

The respective senses or perceptions of these sense organs are word (sound—pertaining to the organ known as the ear), touch (feeling—pertaining to the organ known as the skin), form and shape (sight—pertaining to the organ known as the eye), the various genres of taste (pertaining to the organ known as the tongue), and smell (both the sweet and the foul—pertaining to the organ known as the nose).

All these perceptions and their organs have their origin in the five basic elements of creation, called the 'Panch Maha Bhuts'. [Refer Prashno-panishad of Atharva Veda, question (Canto) 4, verse nos. 8-9.] (2).

3. [This verse describes the different organs of action of the gross body and their functions.]

The organs of action are the following—the organ of speech (i.e. the mouth), the hands, the legs, the anus and the genitals.

Their functions are respectively to speak (mouth), to take and give (hand), to move and go to some place (leg), to excrete waste products from the body (anus), and to reproduce (genital).

All of them have their origin in the Maha Bhuts such as the earth element etc. (the others being water, fire, air and sky elements). [This is because since everything in existence has its origin in these five elements which act as the fundamental building blocks of creation, the bricks of the edifice known as creation, nothing exists that does not have one or the other of these five basic elements playing a role in its existence.] (3).

4. [This verse describes the ‘Antahakaran’ which refers to the components of the subtle body of the creature just like the sense organs of perception and action make up the gross body. The word would therefore briefly mean the inner self, the sub-conscious and the conscience.]

The Antahakaran¹ (the inner self consisting of the subtle body; the conscience; the sub-conscious) consists of the following four units—viz. the Mana² (mind), the Buddhi³ (intellect), the Chitta⁴ (the faculty of reasoning, thought, understanding, attention, the sub-conscious etc.), and Ahankar⁵ (ego, pride, haughtiness and the accompanying arrogance and hypocrisy; lack of humility, simplicity and piety).

Their characteristic features are respectively the following—(a) The Mana typically is inclined to have various ‘Sankalps and Vikalps’, i.e. the mind has a natural tendency to make different vows, resolutions, have ambitions, volitions etc, and seeking alternatives and having doubts and confusions pertaining to their success and correctness.

(b) The Buddhi is characterised by the virtue of ‘Nishchaya’, i.e. it has a natural characteristic or habit or inclination of making certain deductions and arriving at certain conclusions, and then taking decisions based on them followed by a determined action to implement those decisions. The intellect does not believe in dilly-dallying and procrastination; it does not believe in having doubts, confusions and perplexities. It on the other hand believes in analyses, rational logic and discrimination between what is correct and what is not, in taking a decisive action and on resolute functioning unlike the nature of the Mana (mind) which swings from object to object in an undecided manner. That is why we have such phrases as ‘wild swings of the mood’ indicating the fickle and floundering nature of the mind as compared to the robust and self-confident attitude of the intellect.

(c) The Chitta is characterised by the virtue of ‘Avadharana’, literally meaning to have a firm and clear conception of anything and helping one to determine and decide on any given subject. It helps the intellect and mind in their functioning by aiding the mind to become fixed on the subject and abandon its naturally fidgety nature, and the intellect to arrive at a fixed conclusion.

(d) The Ahankar² has ‘Abhiman’ (meaning ego, pride, vanity, arrogance, hypocrisy and exaggerated sense of self-importance) as an integral part of it; indeed both the terms are synonymous with each other. This is because if one has a predominant trait of having ego and pride, he would be inclined to develop arrogance and haughtiness in life as opposed to the eclectic virtues of humility, piety, grace and simplicity shown by a man who has no trace of Ahankar in him. Such a person would become a hypocrite and is jealous of others. These negative traits in his character would affect his overall character, temperament, nature and personality. This element of Ahankar would cast its evil or dark shadow even on the Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect) and the Chitta (sub-conscious). Consequentially, even though these components of his inner self would warn him that a certain thing or deed is harmful for his long term good and is best avoided, the Ahankar would veto their advice and compel the man to heed its own advice instead. As a result a man more often than not does things out of a sense of misplaced self-importance and to satisfy his inflated ego and uphold his false pride. He compromises on rationality and the value of the action on the altar of Ahankar and Abhiman. Therefore, Ahankar and Abhiman are the greatest of pollutants for the inner self.

[Now, the symbolic places where these five subtle units have their dominant presence, and from where they play their respective roles in moulding the individual's character, are being enumerated.]

The Mana has its dominant presence in the upper region of the throat; it is here that the Mana reveals itself; it is its playground. [This is because a man expresses his doubts and confusions by making uncertain sounds in the throat, such as humming, murmuring or making muffled comments. He speaks in hushed tones because he is not certain of what he is to say or what the correct thing is. If he is mentally upset, he weeps and sobs; if he is very happy, he exults and expresses his emotions not in articulate words but sound gestures indicating his happiness or sorrows as the case might be. Besides this, the word Mana also has an element of involvement of the heart along side the mind. The heart has predominant qualities of emotions and sentiments, and the latter are never articulate in their expression as compared to the expression of the intellect which uses forceful logic, rational thinking and powerful words. The sounds and words of the Mana are soft, subtle and supple. An emotional man dominated by the Mana would strum some music or stutter when speaking as compared to the case when the intellect is driving him.]

The Buddhi reveals itself in the mouth; it is here that it is symbolically located and has its area of influence; it is the mouth that is the playground of the Buddhi. [As discussed above, the mouth is the organ by which one speaks out about various things. The man's intellect prowess and level of erudition and wisdom is known only by what he has to say on any given subject. The intellect helps him to participate in debates, discussions and negotiations. The intellect helps one to express wise words and advise others judiciously; it helps to overcome any doubts that the mind might be having by way of speaking cohesively, coherently and articulately. Since the mouth is like the loudspeaker of the brain, it also serves as the spokesman for the intellect. That is why it is said that a stupid man makes himself known by opening his 'mouth'—and not his throat or any other organ for that matter!]

The Chitta has its primary location and dominion in the area around the region of the navel. [The navel is the area from where all the vital Naadis (the sensory nerves) radiate out from their base in the Nabhi Kanda, the knot of nerves in the region of the navel, to all other parts of the body. These Naadis are central to the proper functioning of the entire body and keeping each unit lively with the flow of current of consciousness in them. It is only when the whole body is peaceful, if there is no pain and sufferance in any part of the body that the mind and intellect would be able to think of anything worthwhile. Otherwise, their entire concentration would be focused on the pain and suffering part of the body. This phenomenon is symbolically said here by saying that the navel is the playing ground of the Chitta—i.e. the concentration and attention of the mind can be fixed and the intellect can work properly in its prime form only when the nervous system of the body functions properly. These nerves have the Nabhi Kanda as their central controlling center. Hence the Chitta would depend on the good condition of this navel area; it has its working center around the navel area.]

Similarly, the Ahankar has its fertile play ground in the heart. [For example, when a man does anything difficult and achieves success in it, he says my 'heart' is overjoyed, my 'heart' feels proud of my achievement, etc. He would not say that his mind is proud of the achievement, or that his intellect is joyful at the success. When someone dear to him makes some great achievement, he says that his 'heart' is glad and overwhelmed to

hear this good news, his 'heart' feels exhilarated and proud of the person so dear to him for obtaining this great success, but he never says that the mind or the intellect felt glad or happy over it or proud at the achievement. Therefore, the entity that would develop any trace of pride and arrogance from such achievements and successes would naturally be the 'heart' as opposed to the mind and intellect because it was the one to feel happy, and exulted about it. Hence, the element of pride and ego and their attendant arrogance and haughtiness have their seat in the 'heart'.] (4).

[Note—¹The word *Antahakaran* literally means the 'inner instrument' of the creature by which his mind works and receives the world. The word has two components—viz. 'Antaha' meaning 'inner', and 'Karan' meaning 'instrument that causes the mind to work'. The external organs of the body such as the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin which are the organs of perception physically receive the inputs from the external world, but their actual functioning is due to this Antahakaran or the inner instrument of the subtle body consisting of the mind and intellect complex because if the latter malfunctions the former are useless.

Out the three states of existence of the creature, viz. the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleep states, the mind is active in the first two states only, and therefore the Antahakaran is related to only the first two states of existence. But even here its main field of activity is internal and not external as is implied in the word 'Antaha' itself which means 'inner'. Therefore, the external organs of the body such as the organs of perception and action are only subsidiary and play an ancillary role only vis-à-vis the activity of the 'inner self' consisting of the mind, intellect and sub-conscious as well as the subtle heart which is the seat of various sentiments and emotions. This is simply because the inner self receives inputs from the outside world through the instrument of the external organs, and all the activity of the inner self in relation to the world in which the creature lives depend upon these external organs directly or indirectly.

The Antahakaran functions in four different ways and gets four different names according to these four functions. (1) It is called Chitta or sub-conscious mind and its ability to receive information and remember while performing the function of reception and retention. (2) It is called Mana or logical mind when it performs the function of questioning, doubting and willing. (3) It is called Buddhi or intellect when deducing, deciding and determining. And (4) it is called Ahankar or ego, self pride, arrogance of knowledge when it identifies itself with each of these functions—when it thinks that it has the ability to remember, to question and debate, to decide and will.

The word would therefore briefly mean the inner self of the creature consisting of the subtle body rather than the outer self consisting of the gross body. It is said to be one of the 19 Tattwas or essential elements that came into being at the very commencement of creation.

Depending upon how one interprets the word 'Antahakaran', it is said to have one, two, four or five components.

The Antahakaran *one dimension or aspect* is called the Mana, but this Mana itself has two subtler aspects—viz. the mind and the heart because the notion of Mana as it affects the inner self of the creature revolves around the various tugs, pulls, pushes and prodding that the different hues of character traits such as emotions, sentiments, impulsiveness, spontaneity etc. exert on the creature. The word 'Mana' cannot be restricted to the dictionary version of the term as meaning only the mind, because the heart plays an equal important role in the entire setup. This fact has been elaborately described in Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 5, verse nos. 191-192.

The Antahakaran with *four dimensions* is described in the present Shaarirako-panishad, verse no. 4 above. They are briefly Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (sub-conscious) and Ahankar or Abhiman (pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy, vanity, false self-importance etc.). Again it would be noted that the subtle component of the heart play a secret role in this setup because the ingredient of pride, ego, haughtiness and arrogance along with their sentimental and emotional quotient are very closely related with the heart.

The Antahakaran with *five dimensions or aspects* is described in Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6, and in Paingalo-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9, and in Canto 2, verse no. 3—both of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. The five components of Antahakaran are—(a) Mana (mind), (b) Buddhi (intellect), (c) Chitta (the faculty of concentration and memory; knowledge and consciousness), and (d) Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance). Their attendant Vrittis (inherent character, traits, habits, inclinations and temperaments of a creature) decide the basic nature of a person and the way he would react to a given circumstance, the way he would deal, behave and interact with the world, the way he would interpret things, the way he thinks, the things that would appeal to him and the things he would abhor etc.—all depends upon the mental setup tinged with the fundamental character traits that are firmly ingrained in him.

Since the mind, intellect and the sub-conscious are involved in the definition of Antahakaran, it would follow that the following too would be included as the five components of Antahakaran—(a) Pramaan—knowledge that helps to establish the truth; (b) Vipratipatti—ignorance, delusions, illusions such as imagining a snake in a piece of rope; this is erroneous knowledge; (c) Vikalp—alternatives; that knowledge which is acquired by hearing of it but may not present the correct picture, such as for example a wooden puppet—there seems an apparent difference between plain wood and the puppet, but they are basically the same and defined with the same word ‘wood’; this knowledge is neither true nor false for to say that the puppet is different from an ordinary piece of wood because of its distinctive shape and value would be as much true as saying that it is plain wood; (d) Nidra—meaning sleep; when a man remains oblivious of any truth just like anything gets hidden in darkness though it is very much there, that man is likened to a man sleeping soundly inspite of the goings on around him and therefore remaining unaware of them; and (e) Smriti—literally meaning memory; it refers to that knowledge which is based on experience and witnessing so that it is etched in memory; such knowledge becomes robust and gets soundly established in mind with the passage of time.

²*Mana*—The word Mana has a broad meaning, covering the combined apparatus of the subtle subjective mind and the emotional heart that has emotions and sentiments. This is because they both work in conjunction to determine how and what a man thinks, believes, imagines and is attracted to. Mana refers to the various emotions and thoughts; the dispositions and inclinations; the intentions, ideas and purpose of the mind; the wishes, attractions and desires of the heart; the attractions that tempt the mind, causing it to fix its attention in these attractions, thereby also dragging the heart along which begins to love it and get attached to these attractions. All these factors have a composite effect on the sub-conscious. [Refer—Adhyatma Ramayan, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse no.38-39; the concept has been elaborately described in Chandogya Upanishad, canto 7, section 3.]

Heart is the center where all types of emotions and sentiments have their origin. On the other hand, the subjective mind and the objective intellect are the two components which are like the two limbs of the brain and they work in close cooperation with each other, being the controlling center where all sorts of thoughts and decisions are centered.

The Mana plays a pivotal role in the creature falling into the trap of worldly delusions

or being liberated and delivered from it. Further, all Mantras have had their origin in the mind and heart of ancient sages and seers when they contemplated upon any aspect of Divinity and arrived at some profound spiritual Truth in this creation. The great Maha Vakyas were then 'revealed' to them in their meditative trance. Hence the importance and primary source of everything in this creation as the Mana cannot be neglected or even over-emphasised.

The Mana is to be distinguished from Buddhi, for the former refers to the mind and the latter to the intellect. The most important component of a creature's body is his brain. It is the level of development of the brain that determines in which rung of evolutionary hierarchy the creature stands. The brain has two components—the grosser mind and the subtler intellect. The mind is always in a state of flux, remaining undecided and running hither and thither like a mischievous child let loose, while the intellect is marked by stability and is like an adult who knows what to do and what to choose. When the child, the mind, is put under the care of his parent, the adult intellect, it would have a proper upbringing and would not commit some grave error, while an uncared child would be a nuisance for the society. Likewise, the mind when it is under the supervision and guidance of the intellect is under leash and such a mind can be very productive for the man just like a properly raised child can give a lot to the world when he grows up.

The Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 5-6 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition describes how the Mana or the mind can be a source of both entanglements with the world as well as the source of liberation and deliverance from it. The Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 98-105 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition establishes that the Mana is the root cause of all miseries that torment the creature and rob him of his peace. The Subalo-panishad, Canto 9, verse no. 11 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes the Mana and its effect upon the emotional bearing and structure of the creature. The Dhyan Bindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 25 asserts that it is the Mana that is the cause of the entire creation. The importance and significance of Mana has been extensively expounded upon in Brihad Arankya Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, Brahman 5, verse nos. 4-7, 9, 12; Canto 3, Brahman 7, verse nos. 20 ; Canto 3, Brahman 9, verse nos. 10-17; and Canto 4, Brahman 1, verse no. 6. The Taittiriya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Valli 3, Anuvak 4 describes the importance and significance of Mana as a manifestation of Brahm.

³*Buddhi*—The intellect, reasoning, analysing and discrimination faculty of the mind of a creature; the rational thoughts, intelligence, wit, comprehension, sagacity and erudition. It is the intelligent and analytical mind that helps to intelligently analyse anything and determine its truth and eliminate falsehoods which distinguishes a creature having 'Buddhi' from one who lacks it. Buddhi is also the thinking mind which remembers and ponders and determines upon something or its different aspects relying upon the data collected and previously stored in the sub-conscious part of the brain. [See Adhyatma Ramayan, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse no.38-39.]

The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse nos. 59-60 describes how Buddhi helps the man to see the reality. The Subalo-panishad, Canto 9, verse no. 12 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes Buddhi, its influence on the creature and how it can be controlled and channelised for constructive purposes. Subalo-panishad, Canto 14, verse no. 1 describes how the Buddhi (intellect) is superior to Mana (mind).

⁴*Chitta*—the word Chitta refers to the faculty of reasoning and thought of the mind-intellect complex; the ability to pay attention and fix concentration upon a chosen subject which leads to understanding and a sharp memory; the conscious intellect as well as the sub-conscious mind; the powers of discrimination, understanding, paying attention, memorizing, and the ability to recollect and store information that are characteristics of

the conscious powers exhibited by the mind and intellect apparatus; the sub-conscious and memory, along with its power to remember anything as depicted when the man involuntarily reacts to any given situation depending upon his memory-bank; the ability to concentrate and focus the mind on anything. (The concept has been elaborately described in Chandogya Upanishad, canto 7, section 5; Sanayso-panishad, canto 2, verse no.42-46).

The power of the Chitta is called 'Chitta Shakti'. The word Shakti means power and authority, potentials and energy that any entity possesses. Therefore, the combined stupendous powers exhibited by 'Chitta' are called Chitta Shakti.

The Subalo-panishad, Canto 9, verse no. 14 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes Chitta in detail. The concept has been elaborately described in Chandogya Upanishad, canto 7, section 5; Sanayso-panishad, canto 2, verse no.42-46.

A related concept is the 'Chitta Vrittis'. The Vrittis are the inherent tendencies, the natural inclinations and inborn habits of the Chitta, and the Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 3, verse no. 67, Canto 4, verse no. 53-54 describes how to overcome the various habitual faults of the mind, called the Chitta Vrittis.

⁵*Ahankar*— his is the notion of having false ego, self-pride, self-assertion, vanity, boastfulness, self-righteousness, arrogance, haughtiness; a sense of false prestige and false pride; to think that one is the doer and achiever; to erroneously believe that success is obtained by one's efforts alone and that one is superior to others in many respects etc.

The concept that 'I' is the body and not the 'pure conscious soul' leads to ignorance-based ego and a sense of false pride and prestige, called Ahankar (अहंकार). The constant identification of 'I' (me) with the body and this material world of sense objects lead to the sense of possessiveness in the creature. 'Pure consciousness' mired by ego becomes 'a conditioned consciousness' and fails to remain pure. This is why Ahankar has been likened to a minister of the king—it directs and regulates the actions of the consciousness which, under its influence, loses its independence. This 'conditioned consciousness', working through the mind-intellect-ego combine, is called, inter-alia, 'Chitta' (चित्त). The word also means sub-conscious and its memory bank. Hence this memory of the sub-conscious acts as a referral library for the intellect. The latter falls back on it and rely on it whenever it is in doubt. The quality of books in the library guides the student; similarly, the quality of inherent tendencies stored in the library of Chitta directly affects the inputs of the intellect, and through it, the mind and successively down the hierarchy to the body and its organs of perception and action.

Although the soul has nothing to do with this command chain involving Chitta (sub-conscious and memory)—Vrittis (inherent tendencies and inclinations, nature and temperament) and Vasanas (passions and desires)—Buddhi (intellect)—Mana (emotions and notions, the emotive thoughts)—Sharir (body)—Karma(action and deeds)—the result of deeds and actions—more experience—stored in memory—and the chain continues, but for all practical purposes the Atma/soul is deemed responsible for it because of its sovereign nature.

So, the sincere seeker/aspirant should delineate this conscious from the rest of the chain and break the nexus between them so as to allow the glory of the pure consciousness of the soul to shine through like the splendorous sun breaking through from behind a curtain of clouds.

It is like removing the various veils or covers from around the candle so that its light shines through the darkness of the room and illuminates all the corners of it.

Example of a sleeping man—Ahankar is generally associated with the body when the creature thinks that he has so many achievements to his credit and that he has achieved them with his body. He erroneously begins to have a notion of possessiveness and belonging to this world; he starts to conjure up imaginary relations that have their

relevance only as long as there is the body, for once a man dies these relations snap even without notice, and even in the case the ignorant Atma wished to retain them it cannot because the same son and wife whom he loved so much are eager to get rid of the dead body which is causing pollution in the household! So, when a man snuffs out Ahankar from his mental radar, he becomes as indifferent and dispassionate as a sleeping man who is unconcerned with the external world.

For example, if the house is on fire, a sleeping man wouldn't be bothered at all as long as he is asleep because he is totally disassociated with the house. He does not bother because he is not attached with his 'possession'; a sleeping man just cannot think that the house that he had built on his own strength and effort is getting destroyed. But once he gains consciousness, he is struck with grief and dismay. Similarly, when a wise man realises that the world is not related to him, and his true identity is his Atma and not the body, then he isn't bothered either with the body or the world with which the body is related and the various relations that exist only because of the existence of the body. The Atma has no relationships whatsoever. Absence of Ahankar eliminates all these at one go.

For all practical purposes, a wise man is as good as asleep as far as the external world is concerned. Even as a sleeping person forgets all about the outside world because his sense of belonging to and identification with the world, of calling the world mine and your, of having love or hatred, of having attachment or detachment, of having animosity/enmity or endearment and friendship, of having happiness or grief—all such emotions are literally 'asleep' with him. Similarly, a person who does not have Ahankar is freed from such emotions that are directly related with his sense of involvement with the world through the medium of the body, though he appears to be awake and active in this world.

The Atma or soul is pure and these things have got nothing to do with it. But because there is the false belief that the creature is the gross body and not the pure consciousness and pure self which is called the soul or Atma, all the external actions done by the body appears to have been done by the creature which, in fact, is an erroneous conclusion.

Ahankar has been described in the context of the Antahakaran (the inner self of the creature) as being one of its main components elsewhere in other Upanishads, such as Paingalo Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 3; and Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 6.

Paingalo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse 6 describes the concept of Ahankar in the context of the genesis of creation, and how it was able to influence even the supreme Brahm, in his grosser cosmic manifestation of Lord Vishnu, to get involved in the creation of this delusory world.

How Ahankar affects the creature's nature and temperament has been succinctly described in Niralamb Upanishad, verse nos. 11-12, 20. How it affects path of spiritual liberation and deliverance of the creature has been explained in Yoshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 34-37.

Other references—Subalo-panishad, Canto 9, verse no. 13 of Shukla Yajur Veda.]

5. [This verse now elaborates upon verse no. 1 to describe how the five basic elements such as earth, water, fire, air and sky transformed into various units of the body.

The ideas expressed and expounded upon in verse nos. 5-6 are reflected in Prashno-panishad of the Atharva Veda tradition in its fourth question, verse nos. 8-9.]

The bones, skin, veins and other tubular ducts of the body such as arteries, nerves etc., the hairs and flesh—these are manifestations of the earth element. They have been made or crafted from the earth element. They represent the grossest part of the body.

The urine, mucous, blood, sperms and semen, sweat—these are manifestations of the water element. They have been made or crafted from the water element. [That is, all things that have a fluid dimension must have water element inherent in them.]

Hunger, thirst, laziness and indolence¹, attractions and passions², and sexual activity³—these are manifestations of the fire element. They have been moulded out of the fire element. [¹This is evident during very hot seasons when one becomes lethargic and dozes off to sleep. ²That is why we say that certain passionate things are done ‘in the heat of the moment’. Attraction of the opposite sexes is also due to the presence of the fire element because it generates intense passions. Heat in any form creates restlessness and makes the man uneasy, just like passions of any form—such as having a ‘passion’ for reading, traveling, cooking, sports etc. or any other activity that is dear to one’s heart—must have the concealed fire element in it to keep the drive and energy alive and kicking. Similarly, when we receive someone enthusiastically and affectionately, we say that he is welcomed ‘warmly’, thereby implying the role of the fire element because ‘warmth’ comes from fire and not from ice. ³Sexual activity is obviously a manifest form of the fire element. It involves intense degree of romance and passions in general and such physical actions as hugging, kissing, caressing, intercourse etc. all of which generate heat, increased heart beat and a general increase in the flow of impulses of lust, wanting and passion in the nerves which must be addressed for otherwise they are so overwhelming that they make the man besides himself. This ‘heat’ makes him more often than not even lose control over his senses and wisdom.]

To expand, to run and move, to walk, to fly, the movement of the eyelids etc. — these are manifestations of the air or wind element. They have been crafted out of the air or wind element. [This is because the air or wind element is always mobile; it cannot remain static. A man breathes air continuously without rest; even a balloon filled with air is never at rest. If the Apan wind, the one responsible for movement of food in the intestines, stops functioning, the results would be catastrophic for the living creature. Indeed, even as air in the form of breath is synonymous with life, movement in any form so characteristic of the air or wind element is a definite sign of life, because only a dead body would not move.]

Kaam (lust, yearnings and worldly desires), Krodh (anger, wrathfulness), Lobh (greed, rapacity), Bhaya (fear and consternation) etc.—these are manifestations of the sky element. They have been made from the sky element. [The symbolism here is obvious. All these qualities have no limits; they are as endless as the sky. They cannot be precisely defined and delineated like the vast sky.] (5).

6. [This verse now elaborates upon verse no. 2 to describe how the five basic elements such as earth, water, fire, air and sky transformed themselves into various perceptions of the gross body.]

Word (hearing, sound), touch (feeling), shape and form (sight), taste and smell—these are the five activities which are described as the characteristic virtues displayed by the earth element.

Word (hearing, sound), touch (feeling), shape and form (sight) and taste—these are the four activities which are described as the characteristic virtues displayed by the water element.

Word (hearing, sound), touch (feeling), and shape and form (sight)—these are the three activities which are described as the characteristic virtues displayed by the fire element.

Word (hearing, sound) and touch (feeling)—these are the two activities which are described as the characteristic virtues displayed by the air or wind element.

And word (hearing and sound) is the only one activity which is described as the characteristic virtue displayed by the sky element (6).

[Note—Refer explanation given in verse no. 2. The verse clearly outlines the pyramidal structure of the primary elements in creation. The 'earth' being the grossest and heaviest is at the base, while the 'sky' being the subtlest and lightest is at the top, with the rest of the three elements, viz. the 'water', the 'fire' and the 'air' being arranged in an ascending manner clearly show their declining grossness and increasing subtlety.

To understand how one element can transform itself into so many forms, we can take the example of *isomerism* in chemistry. The word 'iso' means the 'same', and 'meros' means 'parts'. Hence, isomerism refers to the phenomenon whereby two or more compounds that are composed of the same chemical formulae, i.e. they have the same molecular composition but different three dimensional structures; they differ in physical or chemical properties. Such things are called 'isomers' of the principal element.

Extended further, this phenomenon of isomerism would apply to the concept of the same Atma residing in all the living beings having a mind boggling variety of physical structures, besides the fact that all the creatures have the same Atma as well as the same basic elements as their essential identity.

Then there are two types of isomerism—i.e. *structural isomerism* and *stereo isomerism*. The concept of structural isomerism refer to those isomers which have the same molecular formulae but different structural arrangement of atoms or groups of atoms around the central atom or ion called Structural Isomers and this phenomenon is called structural isomerism. This would be like different species of living organisms which have the same Atma at the core, the same set of fundamental five elements set up around this basic core, and then comes the arrangements of secondary elements around this basic core to give rise to varying structural variations in the species as they evolved.

Stereo isomerism is when the same molecular formulae represent two or more compounds which differ in the spatial arrangement of atoms or groups of atoms. Such compounds are called Stereo Isomers. In this case, we deal with one given species such as the human species which have all the gross features the same but the internal geometric patterns in which the secondary and tertiary elements exist determine the individuality of a particular man and set him aside from all others of his ilk.

A related concept is *isomorphism* wherein there is apparent similarity of form between individuals belonging to different races or species. In the field of chemistry it refers to the existence of two or more chemical compounds with the same crystal structure; they differ in chemical composition but have the same crystalline structure. This would be like speaking of the entire human race, or of all the mammals for instance who would exhibit similar external features but have different internal chemistry in the sense that all have their own set of characteristic qualities, virtues and values, their own independent personality, intelligence, emotional quotient etc. Their mental and intellectual setup, their emotional and sentimental quotient, their inherent natural

temperaments and inclinations etc. would differ from one individual to another depending upon the combination in which the three Gunas (Sata, Raja and Tama) exist in them.

In this context, the three Gunas that determine the individual character of the creature, that determine his 'individuality' as compared to the general character of the group to which that individual belongs, are like the *isotopes* in chemistry. The isotope refers to the phenomenon wherein one of two or more atoms of the same chemical element that contain the same number of protons but different numbers of neutrons in their nuclei and therefore have the same atomic number and chemical properties but different mass numbers and physical properties. For example, two brothers have the same genes and the same inheritance, but the presence of the three Gunas in different ratios between them changes their personality and thought processes. One may be a highly righteous man while the other might be just the opposite. Their parents are the same, their upbringing is the same, they have attended the same school and ate the same food, but there is a deep chasm when it comes to their character as individuals.

The metaphysical concept of Bhuts, Tattvas and Dhaatus as being the primary or secondary or tertiary building blocks of creation and their contribution in the process of creation seems to be too abstract to be a reality, but if we relate them to our modern knowledge of chemistry they become very easy to understand, very rational and very evidently possible.

All the elements in existence have been classified into a Periodic Table in chemistry, called the 'Mendeleyev Periodic Table of Elements'. The elements are arranged in it based on their atomic weight (the average mass of a chemical element's atom) or atomic number (the number of protons in the atom of a chemical element's nucleus). The one with atomic number 1 is at the top of the list, and currently there are said to be 116 elements in the list. The increase of atomic number would be like increase in the weight of that element which we can liken to increasing degree of grossness and decreasing degree of subtlety in metaphysics.

The orderliness in Nature can be well gauged from the fact that all the elements behave in a fixed, pre-destined and pre-determinable manner depending upon their place in the table. Those in the same group or column show similar chemical behaviour.

The primary elements are those that have atomic numbers 1 (hydrogen) to 83 (bismuth). The secondary elements would be those having atomic number 84 onwards till 92 (uranium). The tertiary elements would be the ones having atomic numbers above 93 and till 110, and by later additions to 116. These tertiary elements are the trans-uranium elements (i.e. those with atomic numbers higher than 92) and all of them have been produced in the laboratory. This phenomenon is similar to the concept of evolution of newer Tattvas and Dhaatus, newer forms of Kalaas and Gunas that kept on developing by mutations of the primary and secondary elements.

These naturally occurring elements exist in varying forms. For instance, eleven are in the form of gases (hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, fluorine, chlorine, and the six noble gases—helium, neon, argon, krypton, xenon and radon). Two are in liquid form (bromine and mercury). The rest are solids of varying textures and forms. Again this is not enough—for we have some as hard solids (copper, iron), some as soft and not so hard solids (lead), some as viscous fluids (mercury), some as waxy non-metallic elements (phosphorus), some as solid non-metallic elements (sulphur), some that are stable (elements having atomic number 1-83) and others that undergo constant decay and destruction over a period of time, called their 'half lives', e.g. those with atomic number 83 to 92, and then still others that are synthetic such as those having atomic number 93-116 in the present list of the Periodic Table.

Some elements are permanent such as the ones having atomic number 1(hydrogen) - 83 (bismuth), while those above it have a transient life, called radioactive elements. Some

elements are abundantly available such as carbon, while some are precious because of their rarity such as silver and gold, while still other are still rarer and present only in trace, called the trace elements such as selenium, magnesium, potassium etc.

Then there are the 'isotopes' of the same element, i.e. elements having different number of neutrons but the same number of protons in their nucleus and hence the same number of electrons in their shells, thereby showing the same basic chemical behaviour—e.g. tin (which has an astounding 10 isotopes) and carbon (with numerous isotopes).

This single entity 'carbon' proves how the supreme creator was versatile and astoundingly creative when he set about for the mammoth task of creation. The atomic number of carbon is 6; it has many isotopes of which carbon-12 and carbon-13 are said to be stable, while carbon-14 is said to be the most stable amongst its radioactive isotopes because it has a half-life of 5730 years approx. Carbon exists in many natural forms and has four known allotropes—e.g. diamond, graphite, carbon black (coal, coke and charcoal) and fullerenes (hollow cage molecules). Carbon is the most versatile of all elements in creation and it forms more chemical compounds than all the other elements taken together, giving rise to an entire branch of chemistry devoted to it called the organic chemistry. There are millions of known carbon products.

This ubiquitous carbon can be regarded as the most important, most handy, most adaptable, very flexible and highly useful tool in the hands of the cosmic creator which helped him not only in creation but for the planning for its future upkeep, because all the essential ingredients needed to sustain life in this living world are carbon-based. Carbon is the core of proteins, carbohydrates, lipids, nucleic acids—all essential chemical ingredients needed to sustain life and make it viable, besides in the form of hydrocarbons found in coal, petroleum and natural gases which would be needed for the upcoming creation for its daily needs. It exists in the earth's crust as carbonate rocks as well as dissolved in the ocean.

Some molecules of compounds are as simple as water molecule having two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen (both gases), then a slightly higher level of combination results in the formation of different salts. These salts are formed when the hydrogen of an acid is replaced by a metal or its equivalent—the most common form of salt is the table salt (sodium chloride), and other common names which are more complex such as sodium bicarbonate, silver nitrate, calcium carbonate etc.

The carbon chemistry opens a mammoth vista of chemical compounds such as ketones and aldehydes, formaldehydes and resins, simple and complex polymers etc.

The general idea of the above narration is that if such a variety is possible in this world which has a physical limitation of its resources and their application, one can well imagine what astounding possibilities can exist when we consider the unimaginable vastness of this creation in which the known world in which we live is but like a speck of dust or sand on a beach by the ocean. So the authenticity and truthfulness of the manner the Upanishads speak about this creation and its Bhuts, Dhaatus, Tattvas and Kalaas should never be doubted. That we do not understand anything is no proof of its non-existence or veracity; it is the limit of human knowledge and mind that things which are beyond his comprehension or imagination seem absurd to him. The same man thousands of years ago would not have known chemistry as it is understood today, and suppose the present concepts were explained to him then by some wise man who would have been fortunate enough to have the deep insight and a sharp analytical mind to know or interpret certain event or observations in the context of science and then had tried to explain his observations to those primitive societies, he would have been ridiculed, irrational and thought to be outright mad. But with the benefit of hindsight and introspection we would now realise that what he had taught then was indeed the truth,

albeit spoken in a language in vogue at that remote point of time which is now incomprehensible for us, and therefore creating skepticism in modern times.]

16. [The following verses narrate how the earlier five basic elements of creation mutated and branched out to create more elements. Thus, from these five elements there arose seventeen at the micro level, and then expanded to twenty five ultimately.]

The body of the creature is called the *Linga Deha*. It consists of the following seventeen dimensions or units or elements—the five organs of perception (ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin) + the five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, anus and genital) + the five Prans (the five subtle forms of the vital winds present inside the body—such as Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyan and Udaan) + one Mana (mind) + one Buddhi (intellect) = seventeen units or elements of creation at the micro level or the level of the individual (16).

[Note—These seventeen units or elements of creation are like the secondary elements that came into being as the process of creation moved forward. They formed the gross body of the creature representing the microcosm. Out of these, five gross organs of perception and five gross organs of action form the ten elements or units of creation which are considered comparatively gross in nature. The other seven, i.e. the five winds, one mind and one intellect are the subtle elements or units of creation at the microcosmic level. Therefore, the former is called the ‘gross body’, and the latter is called the ‘subtle body’.

The phrase *Linga Deha* literally refers to the ethereal form of the corporal body of a creature. But in the context of the Atma which is itself ethereal in form and most sublime and subtle in nature, it would mean the physical body that it assumes, a body that has gross components as well as subtle components existing side by side.

The Paingalo-panishad, canto 2, verse no. 4 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes how this *Linga Deha* came into being. It states that the supreme Lord created five Koshas or sheaths. They are the following—‘Annamaye Kosh’ or the food sheath, ‘Pranmaye Kosh’ or the vital wind sheath, ‘Manomaye Kosh’ or the mental sheath, ‘Vigyanmaye Kosh’ or the intellect sheath, and ‘Anandmaye Kosh’ or the bliss sheath. [These sheaths cover the Atma or pure conscious self like various coverings or shrouds wrapping any object.]

The Annamaye Kosh is that which was created by the intake of food, was nourished and developed by food, and at the end it finally disintegrates into the basic ingredients that constitute food and merges with the earth element from where the food has derived its original ingredients. This forms the gross body of the creature.

The Pranmaye Kosh consists of the five vital winds (Pran, Apaana, Vyan, Udaan, and Samaana) along with the five organs of actions (hands, legs, mouth, excretory and reproductive).

The Manomaye Kosh consists of the mind and the five organs of perceptions (ears, eyes, nose, tongue and skin), while the Vigyanmaye Kosh consists of the combined apparatus made of the intellect and these five organs of perceptions.

A combination of these three sheaths, i.e. Pranmaye Kosh (vital wind sheath), Manomaye Kosh (the mental sheath) and Vigyanmaye Kosh (the intellect sheath) is what is known as the ‘Linga Deha’ of a creature, or the ethereal form of the corporeal body. This is the subtle body of the creature.]

17. Now the elements or units of creation at the macrocosmic level are being enumerated. Since the creation at this macro level is known as Nature or Prakriti, these are therefore the units of the latter. They are the following—one Mana (mind) + one Buddhi (intellect) + one Ahankar (pride and arrogance) + one Akash element + one air element + one fire element + one water element + one earth element = total of eight elements that cast their shadow on the purity of Nature (just like the shadow of the earth casts its shadow on the bright moon to result in the lunar eclipse).

These elements are called the eight ‘Vikaars’ (literally meaning faults, errors, shortcomings or imperfections) that are present in Nature¹.

Besides these eight Vikaars, there are said to be sixteen more Vikaars of Prakriti or Nature² (17).

[Note--¹This is because primarily and in its basic form, Nature is immaculate and uncorrupted and neutral. When this creation began to take its shape in the cosmic bowls of Nature, the former began influencing the latter and certain subtle changes started to make their appearances in it just like a lady begins to show physical anatomical changes when she becomes pregnant. The immaculate and pristine pure form of Nature becomes affected by the unique attributes of its offspring which was developing in its womb just like a pregnant lady undergoes changes in her body. Now, as the embryo of creation developed, it changed shape continuously, and from the first single cell of the egg and the sperm it develops into a complex structure of the body of the creature. What was a single-cell organism in the beginning of creation (such as the amoeba, paramecium, algae, fungi, bacteria etc.) gradually underwent mutations and transformations, under the influence of various physical and biological evolutionary forces, to grow and develop into the highly complex organisms we have today (such as the human species).

This is a metaphoric way of saying that the primary five elements (verse no. 1) gradually mutated and underwent profound changes, giving out new branches and offshoots, to develop into more and more elements as the cosmic embryo developed. Finally there came into being twenty five elements (verse no. 18-20).

Let us very briefly analyse why the different organs formed out of the basic elements and their relevant functions are classified as ‘Vikaars’ or faults and imperfections vis-à-vis the Atma at the micro level and the Prakriti or Nature at the macro level. For this, one example of the eye is taken. The eye sees things by two methods—either directly or through a viewing glass. Suppose the viewing glass is tinged green, then it is obvious that the entire scene seen by the eye through this glass would be influenced by this colour, and it would be vastly different than what it sees without it. The entire process of seeing is not such a simple mechanism however, for a number of other factors impinge upon it to bend one’s perception of what is seen. Such as for example the factor of mental alertness and whether the mind is focused on the thing seen or it is diverted elsewhere, for in the latter case the brain would not register anything seen at all. Besides this, the general temperament and attitudes of the seer, his general health and especially of the eye, his education, knowledge and level of wisdom, the way he interprets the sight and the importance he assigns to its different aspects, the inherent quality and exterior features of the thing seen and other physical factors such as light and distance etc.—all play their part in the eye seeing anything.

Each slight variation in any one factor would consequentially produce a distorted picture of the real form and nature of the thing seen by the same eye. The result is obvious to imagine—the observer or seer of the sight, i.e. the Atma which is the pure self of the man and the actual entity that does the seeing through the medium of the gross organ of the eye and the subtle organ of the brain, gets various versions of the same scene

seen at different times and under different circumstances. This creates confusions for the seer. This idea has been beautifully enunciated in Dhyan Bindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse nos. 93/1-93/15, which describe how and why the immaculate Atma appears to be tainted itself, and why it sees the world as tainted. It uses the analogy of the Atma living in a lotus of coloured petals like someone living in a cell or glass house with coloured walls, and then seeing the world through these tinted walls as much as he himself is being watched by others through the same walls. Obviously, the real colour of the world viewed by the Atma through this enclosure would be tainted by the colour of the petal or wall of the Lotus in which it lives as much as its own pristine and immaculate from getting corrupted when seen by others for the same reason.

Then again, what one makes of a particular sight would invariably vary from what another person makes out of it. For example, a lady is seen as a mother by one man, while another sees her as his wife and still someone else as his sister. So the perception changes, and with it the entire way a creature deals with this world. Refer also to Yogtattva Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 131.

This logic applies to all other elements mentioned in these verses.

²The Yogtattva Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 12-13 presents a list of sixteen other faults or imperfections that afflict the creature and thereby taint its otherwise immaculate Atma.

Some of the numerous faults, weaknesses, imperfections, blemishes or shortcomings that affect the character of a Jiva (living being, the creature) and prevent his pure and uncorrupt self, the Atma, from retaining its primarily untainted, pristine pure and immaculate nature and form which is one and non-dual, called the 'Kaivalya' state of its existence, are the following—Kaam (worldly desires, passions and lust), Krodh (anger, spite and wrath), Bhaya (fear and consternation), Moha (attractions, attachments, delusions, infatuations, longing), Mada (arrogance, haughtiness and intoxication), Raja (the second of the three qualities creating worldly tendencies and desires related to this world), Janma-Mritu (the cycle of birth and death and its attendant horrors and agonies), Kaarpanya (being stringy and miserly, specially in the field of religious duties such as giving alms and making charities, or supporting such activities; the word would cover miserliness of thoughts in the sense that one does not give the correct knowledge to others out of jealousy), Shok (sorrows, grief and agonies), Tandra (being sleepy, indolent, lethargic, lazy, careless and showing lack of energy and alertness), Kshudha (hunger, both physical such as for food and the insatiable desire for sensual gratification, as well as emotional such as the insatiable longing for worldly things), Trisha (desires, wishes and yearnings pertaining to the world) [12], Trishna (thirst, ambition, avarice and greed; the word is usually used in the negative sense; it pertains to a man's insatiable desire and greed for worldly things), Lajjaa (shame, dishonour, ignominy), the constant fear of Dukha and its attendant Vishaad (i.e. being constantly tormented by the fear of sufferance from sorrows and grief of all kinds and the attendant agonies and miseries, distresses and a sense of despair and hopelessness and haplessness), Harsha (to feel elated and happy, to be glad and joyous, to feel cheerful and exhilarated by certain situations which seem to be in favour, such as on receiving some good news), etc.

It is only when the creature is freed from the tainting effects of all these faults, blemishes, imperfections and shortcomings that the Atma can realise its one and non-dual pure conscious form, the state of existence called 'Kaivalya'.

These shortcomings, imperfections, taints, blemishes or defects cast a shadow on the character of the Jiva and makes it appear that his Atma, which is his true identity, has these respective shortcomings or defects or imperfections in it. This is because the Atma of the Jiva allows itself to be affected by any or all of these faults and imperfections, forgetting that this is not its true nature but an illusionary scenario created by ignorance

of the truth of its primary nature, which is leading it to delusions and its attendant problems. Each fault or imperfection or defect or shortcoming enumerated in these two verses, in association with others and acting in coordination with them in various permutations and combinations create an infinite array and variety of traits of character, temperaments, habits, personalities, attributes, virtues and qualities in all the creatures. The resultant effect is that there is no similarity between any two of them. Thus, the Atma, which is one and the same in all the creatures, appears to be of as many varieties as there are number of creatures. It assumes a dual and varied form; it becomes multifarious and diverse; it loses its non-dual, indivisible and immutable nature. In other words, it has become tainted and full of faults associated with the worldly creature; it has lost its pristine purity and singleness.

The 'perfect' Atma has thus become 'imperfect'; the 'untainted' Atma has been 'tainted'.]

18-20. [These verses describe the twenty five elements or units or dimensions or aspects of creation.]

The five gross organs of perception present in the body such as the ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose make up the five gross units or elements of creation at the micro level of the body of the creature. [Total 5 organs of perception.]

Then there are the five organs of action such as the anus, genital, hand, leg and speech (mouth). These are the five gross organs which add their count to the number of elements or units or dimensions that exist in this creation at the micro level. [Total 5 organs of action.]

Besides these, there are the five subtle sense perceptions such as the perceptions of hearing (relevant to the ear), feeling or touching (relevant to the skin), seeing various forms and shapes (relevant to the eye and the faculty of sight), taste (relevant to the tongue) and smell (relevant to the nose). [Total 5 senses of perception.]

Thus the tally comes to twenty three elements of creation as follows—8 Vikaars (of verse no. 17) + 5 organs of perceptions + 5 organs of action + 5 senses of perceptions (as enumerated in verse nos. 18-19) = total 23 (18-19).

The twenty fourth element or unit or dimension of creation is said to be the invisible and un-manifest cosmic Nature. [This brings the tally to 23 + 1 = 24.]

And finally, there is the ultimate chief Authority of creation, called the supreme Purush, the Supreme Being, who forms the last unit of creation. This entity is immutable and indivisible, it is non-dual and eternal, it is infinite and imperishable, and it is all-pervading, all-incorporating and all-encompassing. Therefore there is nothing beyond it to count; it is the final frontier; there is nothing that exists beyond it that can be counted as an independent entity superseding the Chief Purush.

Thus we come to the total tally of twenty five elements. [The tally is arrived as follows—23 elements + 1 invisible and un-manifest cosmic Nature (as described in verse no. 18-19) + 1 Supreme Being (as described in verse no. 20) = total 25 elements*.]

In this way, the entire universe or cosmos is made up of twenty five elements.

This is the teaching of this Upanishad; this is what this Upanishad proclaims and unequivocally asserts (20). [18-20].

[Note—The gross body can be studied at various levels depending upon the classification used to study its constitution and structure. The structural elements are variously called the Bhuts, the Dhaatus and the Tattvas.

(a) The *Primary level* of the elements—This consists of the five primary elements called the ‘Pancha Mahabhuts’. They were formed at the beginning of creation, and consist of earth, water or fluid, fire or energy, air or wind and sky or space elements in increasing degree of subtlety.

They can be studied at two levels—one at the very core level, and the other at the more general level.

(a) (i) The study of the body at the core level of the five Bhuts consisting of the five primary elements consisting of the sky or space, air or wind, fire or energy, water or fluids, and earth. Refer verse nos. 1-2, and 5-6 of this Upanishad above.

(a) (ii) The next level would be the various Koshas or Sheaths that are made of a combination of these five elements. They are the following—Anna Maye Kosh (the food sheath), Pran Maye Kosh (the vital wind sheath), Manomaye Kosh (the mind sheath), Vigyan Maye Kosh (the intellect sheath), and Anand Maye Kosh (the bliss sheath). These Koshas are also like the elements or units that decide the complexities of the creature’s body and its position in the hierarchy of evolution.

All the living organisms can be classified into the following five types depending upon the number of Koshas they have—(i) Udbhij—these are those life forms that are born from seeds, such as members of the plant kingdom. These have only one Kosha, the Anna Maye Kalaa. In other words, they depend on food and become food for others higher up in the evolutionary ladder. (ii) Swedaj—they are those which are born from dampness and sweat, such as fungi, algae, bacteria, germs, mosquito, lice, flies etc. They have two Koshas, viz. Anna Maye and Pran Maye. That is, they are formed from food, they live for food and they die as food. Besides this, they also exhibit signs of life, e.g. the mosquito and lice have life like any other member of the animal kingdom. (iii) Andaj—they are placed higher up in the evolutionary ladder, and are born from eggs, whether inside the mother’s womb or outside. Such birds as pigeon, sparrow, parrot, peacock etc. come under this category. They have three Koshas which are Anna Maye, Pran Maye and Mano-maye. The last Kosh refers to the fact that such creatures have a mind and heart which enables them to think, albeit in a primitive level. (iv) Jaruyuj—these are the creatures that are born as embryo that develops inside the mother’s womb. Under this class come the animals such as horses, cows, dogs, elephants etc. They have four Koshas, such as Anna Maye, Pran Maye, Mano-maye and Vigyan Maye. The last Kosh refers to their ability to have a higher level of thinking ability called intelligence. The human being comes under this last category with the added benefit of having five Koshas. Besides the four Koshas mentioned above in other creatures of this category, the man has the fifth one and it is called the Anand Maye Kosh. It is only possessed by a man and not by other creatures in the sense that the man can realise the true meaning of the terms ‘bliss and happiness that is eternal and substantial’ by the virtue of his attaining higher level of intelligence and his ability to delve into the secrets of the concept of truth itself and then realising that kind of happiness and bliss that is not superficial and which is not limited to enjoyment of the sensual pleasures of the body and the material comforts of the world, but which has a holistic and all-inclusive dimension that incorporates the spirit or the soul.

(b) The *secondary level* of study of the body and its structure would be at the level of the Tattvas. It consists of the Linga Deha made up of the seventeen Tattvas which are seventeen dimensions or units or elements that constitute it—the five organs of perception (ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin) + the five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, anus and genital) + the five Prans (the five subtle forms of the vital winds present inside the body—such as Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyana and Udaana) + one Mana (mind) + one Buddhi (intellect) = seventeen units or elements of creation at the micro level. [Reference Shaarirako-panishad, verse no. 16.]

The gross body can be further classified as consisting of twenty three elements. They are the following—

(1) The five gross organs of perception present in the body such as the ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose make up the five gross units or elements of creation at the micro level of the body of the creature. [Total 5 organs of perception.]

(2) Then there are the five organs of action such as the anus, genital, hand, leg and speech (mouth). These are the five gross organs which add their count to the number of elements or units or dimensions that exist in this creation at the micro level. [Total 5 organs of action.]

(3) Besides these, there are the five subtle sense perceptions such as the perceptions of hearing (relevant to the ear), feeling or touching (relevant to the skin), seeing various forms and shapes (relevant to the eye and the faculty of sight), taste (relevant to the tongue) and smell (relevant to the nose). [Total 5 senses of perception.]

(4) The eight Vikaars such as one Mana (mind) + one Buddhi (intellect) + one Ahankar (pride and arrogance) + one Akash element + one air element + one fire element + one water element + one earth element = total of eight elements that cast their shadow on the purity of Nature (just like the shadow of the earth casts its shadow on the bright moon to result in the lunar eclipse). These elements are called the eight 'Vikaars' (literally meaning faults, errors, shortcomings or imperfections) that are present in Nature and affect the basic nature of all living beings.

Thus the tally comes to twenty three elements of creation as follows—5 organs of perceptions + 5 organs of action + 5 senses of perceptions + 8 Vikaars = total 23. [Reference Shaarirako-panishad, verse no. 17-19.]

(c) The next level of study of the body is the *tertiary level*. The tertiary elements that constitute the body all living beings would be the following nine—the three Gunas such as the Sata which the best quality in creation, the Raja which is the medium quality, and the Tama which is the lowest quality (refer Shaarirako-panishad, verse nos. 7-13), and the six aspects of Anatahakarans which is the inner self of the creature consisting of the sub-conscious or conscience that governs his innate character. The five aspects of Anthahakaran are the following (1) Mana or mind, (2) Buddhi or intellect, (3) Chitta or the faculty of concentration and memory; knowledge and consciousness, (4) Ahankar or ego, pride, arrogance, (5) Vrittis or inherent character, traits, habits, inclinations and temperaments of a creature based on these basic components of the subtle body—refer Paingalo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 3), and (6) the various Vasanas (worldly passions, lusts and yearnings—Muktiko-panishad, Canto 2). The total comes to $3 + 6 = 9$. These nine decide the inherent character and basic nature and temperament of the creature.

(d) The 7 Dhaatus—The structural features of the gross physical body consists of the so-called seven Dhaatus. These stand for the structural constituent of the body which supports and sustains its existence. According to ancient Indian system of medicine, they are the following—(1) Rasa (lymph and mucous; sap), (2) Rakta (blood), (3) Maansa (flesh), (4) Meda (fat and muscles), (5) Ashthi (bones and cartilage), (6) Meja (marrow), and (7) Shukra (semen).

According to other interpretations, these seven Dhaatus which form the structural features of the gross body and give it its shape and support it are the following—(1) all forms of fluid ingredients such as blood, urine, mucous, lymph etc, (2) bone and cartilage, (3) marrow, (4) flesh, fat and muscles, (5) abdominal organs such as stomach etc, (6) skin, and (7) Naadis (arteries, veins, capillaries and nerves).

(e) The structure of the body as explained in the Upanishads can be easily understood when we analyse it in the context of modern science of chemistry. This gross body of a creature can be compared to the molecular structure of any chemical substance or any thing in this world for that matter that is made up of certain basic elements. The

molecules are also not visible to the naked eye just like the ingredients of the body mentioned above except some of them such as the skin and mucous much like the external features of the finished chemical product.

At the next level comes the atomic structure, or the subtle level of constitution of the body. It is like the atoms of any chemical molecule that make up the basic building blocks or units of that molecule. For example, Benzene has a hexagonal structure which would be like the gross structure of the creature's body called the Dhaatu, while the Carbon and Hydrogen atoms (C_6H_6) that go in to form the basic and fundamental ingredients of Benzene are like its subtle structure called the Bhut.

To understand how one element can transform itself into so many forms, we can take the example of *isomerism* in chemistry. It has been explained at length in note of verse no. 6 of this Upanishad above.

*The Maho-panishad of Sam Veda, in its Canto 1, verse no. 5 gives a list of the twenty-four Tattvas in the specific sequence as follows—the five sense organs of perception (eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin) [these are the 1st five Tattvas]+ the five sense organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, excretory and reproductive) [these are the 2nd five Tattvas]+ one Mana (mind) [this is the 11th Tattva] + one Ahankar (pride and ego) [this is the 12th Tattva] + one Pran (vital airs or life-giving winds) [this is the 13th Tattva] + one Atma (consciousness) [this is the 14th Tattva] + one Buddhi (intellect) [this is the 15th Tattva] + the five Tanmatras (the five subtle senses of perception such as sight, hearing, taste, smell and feeling or touching) [these are the 16th to 20th Tattvas] + the five primary elements called the Panch Bhuts (earth, water, fire, air and sky) [these form the 21st to 25th Tattvas] = total twenty five Tattvas. {5 + 5 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 5 + 5 = 25.}

Refer Taittiriya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Valli 1, Anuvak 7 in this context.]

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5. (h) The Yogkundalini Upanishad:--

(Canto 3, verse nos. 20-23)

20-23. When the spiritual aspirant who has developed this wisdom of thought that the supreme entity that empowers the faculty of speech to speak is the supreme transcendental Lord (Brahm) residing in his own bosom as his true self (as pure conscious Atma), he would behave accordingly. So, when someone speaks ill of him, or speaks to him with words that are rough, insulting and generally unwarranted, or on the contrary even speaks good of him and say comforting nice words to him, he would remain steady, composed and calm with stoic equanimity in both the cases. He would not at all be affected either by the uncalled for words and insinuations and lose his poise and calm, nor would he feel elated and proud at being praised and spoken good of. In both the cases he would remain completely indifferent to, unruffled by and unconcerned with what is being said. [This is because he knows that the Lord is speaking to him—scolding him for his wrongs, errors and shortcomings, or testing his patience, resilience and resolve, or lauding him for his goodness and virtuousness. So he must accept everything with great humility, for therein lies his greatness and proof of his exalted and enlightened state of existence.] [20 ½].

The creation at the microcosmic level of the individual creature is said to be of three kinds—viz. *Vishwa*, *Taijas* and *Pragya*¹. The same creation at the macrocosmic level of the universe is said to be also of three kinds—viz. *Viraat*, *Hiranyagarbha* and *Ishwar*². The created world, i.e. the gross world, is similarly of three kinds—viz. *Bhu*, *Bhuvaha* and *Swaha*³ [22].

All the various aspects of creation have unfolded from one basic source (the *Bindu*)⁴, and when the time comes for conclusion and folding up of the world, they would naturally revert to their original and basic form from which they had sprouted in the beginning. [This single source is the supreme entity known as *Brahm*.] That is, when things are seen in the correct perspective and analysed with intelligent application of the mind, all extraneous appearances vanish and only the basic oneness of the entire edifice of creation is visible. In other words, when the world comes to a conclusion, it would merge and become indistinguishable from the egg-like primordial source from which it had emerged [23]. (20-23).

[Note—¹The *Vishwa* refers to the gross body of the creature, i.e. his sense organs of perception and action which makes him aware of the external material and artificial world during his waking state; the *Taijas* refers to the subtle body of the creature, i.e. the mind-intellect complex that is active in his dreaming state of consciousness when the external physical world has ceased to exist but the mind still conjures up a colourful picture of the world in the dream and keeps itself as well the consciousness as active in it as in the physical world; and *Pragya* is causal body of the creature, i.e. the deep sleep state of consciousness when the mind has also ceased to exist.

²Similarly, the three levels of existence at the macro level of creation are called respectively *Viraat*, *Hiranyagarbha* and *Ishwar*. The word *Viraat* refers to the gross body of the cosmic consciousness that is vast and all-incorporating ('*Viraat*') and forms the sum total of all the gross bodies that exist at the micro level of creation; the *Hiranyagarbha*, literally the golden egg of the creation, refers to the subtle body of this *Viraat* from which the latter has emerged; and *Ishwar* is the macro level counterpart of the causal body of the creature, i.e. it represents the causal body of the *Viraat* and the sum total of all the causal bodies in creation.

Since the 'body' must have some living entity residing in it, it follows that this 'someone' or 'some living entity' is different from the body and it uses the body merely as its habitat or dwelling. This 'living entity' is known as the supreme transcendental consciousness called the *Atma* of the individual at the micro level of creation, and *Brahm* at the macro level. It is 'transcendental' because it goes beyond the limitations and definitions of the gross or subtle body. Since *Brahm* is the 'cause' of the entire creation coming into being, the inner chamber of the body where it lives is called 'causal'—one that causes something to happen. The counterpart of *Brahm* in the creature's body is the *Atma*. It is called 'consciousness' simply because it is the only truly living entity in the otherwise entirely inert and inane gross body made up of different elements which are themselves lifeless and lack any inherent consciousness in them besides being perishable and comparatively gross as compared to the pure Consciousness. Since the living being shows all signs of life and consciousness, since it has emotions and feelings, it is more akin to this *Atma* than it is to the gross inert body. This fact is acknowledged when the scriptures assert and affirm that the true nature and identity of the creature is the *Atma* and not the body in which this *Atma* lives.

Taking the example of this material world, physical science tells us that everything has a visible structure that depends upon molecules which themselves are formed by

arrangement of atoms in different permutations and combinations. The atoms also have a world of their own, with the electrons circulating the central nucleus consisting of the protons and the neutrons. When we apply this theory to metaphysical understanding of creation, we can draw a parallel and deduce that the visible physical world is the gross body of Brahm, the molecules are the subtle body, and the atom is the causal body. The nucleus of the atom without which the atom—and therefore the entire edifice of the material world dependent upon this atom—would cease to have an existence is the Brahm of Vedanta. This would be the macrocosmic view of creation. Its microcosmic partner would be the atom itself—with its rounded structure being the gross body, the component of the electrons, neutrons and protons etc. being its subtle body, while the nucleus itself would be causal body which houses the neutrons, protons and other sub-atomic forces that regulate the functioning of the edifice of the atom as a whole.

³The seeds of the three worlds that would come into existence were encrypted in the three words that the creator Brahma had pronounced at the time of creation. They were—‘Bhu’ from which was created the mortal world represented by earth and its inhabitants, ‘Bhuvaha’ from which the space above the earth was created, i.e. the world of the sky where birds as well as Spirits etc. would live, and ‘Swaha’ represented the heavens where the Gods would have their abode. Therefore, these three words are the seeds from which the huge tree of this creation came into existence.

In the context of what has been said in note 1 and 2 above, the Bhu would correspond to the gross body of creation, Bhuvaha to the subtle body, and Swaha to the causal body, while the supreme Brahm would be the one who pronounced these words to initiate the process in the beginning.

⁴This phenomenon can be best understood with the example of the huge tree with numerous big and small branches with their leaves, multicolored flowers, succulent fruits and hordes of birds, insects et al that find their temporary perch or permanent abode on it. The entire tree has had its origin in one single seed that is minuscule as compared to the size of the tree. This seed is like the ‘Brahmaand’ or universe in a miniature form, while the tree itself is the unfolded universe with its astounding variety and an astonishing array of multifaceted characteristics. When someone wishes to know the fundamental truth about the origin of this colourful tree, he would obviously come to conclusion that it is the seed. Similarly, when one goes deeper and deeper and sees the basic unit from which this edifice called the universe has emerged he would finally come to the conclusion that it is the microscopic Atma known as cosmic consciousness or Brahm. This is essentially the philosophy of the non-dual nature of the creation and the basis of Vedantic canons.

We can take another example to understand this phenomenon of the world having its origin in one single source—the ‘dot’, the Bindu, and then extending to reveal itself in its full bloom and vibrancy, and finally retracing itself back into the dot or the ‘self’ from where it had started out in the beginning on its journey of adventure should it wish to find its place of origin. Suppose one wishes to draw a line on a paper. The first point where the pen touches the paper is the metaphoric ‘dot’ or Bindu, and this is then stretched to become a line of whatever length one wishes. Can anyone draw a line without first making a dot? So it is safely deduced that the line is actually an extension of the single dot or Bindu, that the line consists of uncountable number of dots that add up to appear in the form of the line, and that the dot or Bindu is the parent-source of the entire line. When this ‘stretched dot’ known as the line ever wishes to retrace its step and find its source of origin, it is obvious that it would come back to the point called the dot which was made when the tip of the pen had first touched the paper. Similarly, if the line wishes to know its true nature it would discover that it is nothing but a series of dots.

Every modern man who has encountered the computer with its astounding and stupendous abilities knows the basic fact that the machine works on a series of zeros and

ones; it knows no other language except the zero and the digit one. Likewise, a wise and enlightened man knows nothing else except the Atma and Brahm. The entire edifice of creation revolves around these two units as far he is concerned. But does this mean that there is duality? No, never, for he learns that the Atma and Brahm are the same entities at different planes of existence, the former at the micro level of existence and the latter at the macro level of existence.]

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5. (i) **The Narayan Upanishad:--**

(Verse nos. 1-2)

1. Verily, it is Lord Narayan¹ who reclines peacefully and blissfully in the bosom of all living beings as their Atma or their 'true self', which is pure consciousness.

Before this visible creation came actually into being, Lord Narayan decided to initiate the mystical process of creation, and so he resolved 'Let me create living beings and a creation that has 'the mystical and esoteric factor of life' in it'².

It is from Narayan that the all-pervading and immanent life-giving and life-sustaining Pran³ has emerged. It is from Narayan that Mana (mind) and the various organs of the body emerged. The fundamental primary elements of creation, such as the sky, the air or wind, the fire or energy, the water and the earth which bears the entire living world, are all born from Narayan.

It is from Narayan that Brahma, the creator, is born. It is from Narayan that Shiva, the concluder, has come into being. It is from Narayan that Indra, the king of Gods, is born. All the Prajapatis⁴, the legendary guardians of creation and regarded as the first manifestations of the Lord as 'living beings' of the visible creation from whom the rest of the creatures were born, also have Narayan as their parent.

It is from Narayan that the twelve Adityas⁵ (the celestial suns and the Sun God) are born. It is from Narayan that the eleven Rudras⁶ (the various forms of Lord Shiva), the eight Vasus⁷ and all the Chandas (literally the poetical styles in which the hymns of the Vedas were composed, but here implying the Vedas themselves) have come into being.

Everything in existence has its origin in Narayan; everything goes about doing its assigned tasks on the orders and inspiration of Narayan; and it is in Narayan that they finally take their rest at the time of conclusion.

This is what the first of the Vedas, i.e. the Rig Veda⁸, unequivocally asserts and affirms (1).

[Note—¹Lord Narayan and Vishnu are synonymously treated in the scriptures. The etymology of the word *Narayan* is—the primary one who has his abode in the primordial causal waters of the cosmos; one who is the abode of all living creatures; one who has his residence in the bosom of all living beings as their Atma or pure self or consciousness; one who is the final goal of all spiritual pursuits. When the transcendental Supreme Being decided to initiate creation, his first revelation was Hiranyagarbha which represented the macrocosmic subtle body of creation, and from it emerged the *Viraat Purush* who is the

macrocosmic gross body of creation. This 'Viraat' is literally the vast, infinite, measureless, fathomless and colossal form of the supreme Brahm, a form which is all-pervasive, all-encompassing, all-inclusive, immanent and omnipresent in creation. The 'Purush' is literally an entity that lives inside a dwelling, here referring to as the pure consciousness that lives as the Atma of all the living beings. (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/5/18-19). This Viraat Purush is therefore the vast and all-inclusive cosmic Consciousness that entered the gross body of the creature and found a comfortable a ode in the heart as his Atma. This Viraat Purush at the macro level of creation is known as *Vishnu*, the one who lives immanently in this creation, inseparable from it and forming its integral part.

Since Narayan or Vishnu is the term used to imply the Viraat Purush who is Brahm personified at the macrocosmic level of creation, it follows that Narayan or Vishnu is the supreme Lord of creation. It is from him that the rest of the creation has emerged. All forces of creation, right from their origin till their conclusion, have this Narayan representing Brahm as their primary source. It is Narayan that is the eternal fountain from which they all the dynamic forces of creation derive their independent strengths, abilities, authorities, potentials and powers. The primary forces are represented by Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, protector and nourisher, and Shiva the concluder. The other elements of creation are the sky, air, fire, water and earth. Indra represents the chief force that controls all other unit forces of creation, and therefore he has been depicted as the 'king of Gods' because all the Gods are deemed to personify one or the other aspects of the divine forces of creation which are responsible for controlling the various facets of the multifarious and varied creation. For example, Aditya or the Sun gives light, heat and energy to the creation in their twelve forms, including the visible Sun in the sky. The Vasus represent the essential assets that are needed to sustain all forms of life on this earth. Rudras represent the dynamic and forceful nature of a creature that helps it be pro-active and assertive in this world, to protect the assets generated by him and give protection to the society and his dependants by the use of force if necessary. And so on and so forth.

Lord Narayan or Vishnu is said to recline on the *Kshirsagar* which is the celestial ocean of milk indicating Amrit or the ambrosial fluid of eternity and bliss. That is why he is immortal and blissful, being surrounded by it. This ocean also indicates the primordial fluid from which the rest of the creation is formed, and hence it is the 'causal water' or the causative factor which is at the foundation of all living creation coming into being; it is the wellspring of life in all its varied forms. The scriptures describe that earlier there was water everywhere, and from this primordial fluid emerged the earth and the fire element that kept this earth warm, making it habitable and enabling it to harbour life forms. This fact has been affirmed in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 2, verse no. 2, and the Old Testament of the Holy Bible, the Book of Genesis, verse nos. 9-11.

Narayan or Vishnu has dark blue hue as his complexion, symbolising the *blue colour* of the endless sky which implies that wherever there is sky Lord Narayan is invariably present at the place. He has four arms signifying the four quarters or quadrants of the compass, implying that the Lord controls all the corners of the creation. His *Chakra* (discus) stands for the cosmic mind (because like the mind, the Chakra also flies off on the instructions of Vishnu to pursue its target relentlessly), the *Gadaa* (mace) stands for the cosmic intellect (because it acts to forcefully subdue the opponent in the form of the wayward mind and organs of the body), the *Padma* (lotus) stands for the continuously evolving world (because lotus springs forth from water, and this world also springs forth from the causal waters of the cosmos), and *Shankha* (conch) stands for the five elements such as sky, air, fire, water and earth. There are two more weapons in the hands of

Narayan or Vishnu—viz. the bow called *Saarang* symbolising cosmic senses, and the sword called *Nandak* symbolising wisdom.

Let us analyse how the Shankha or conch stands for the five elements as observed here. The conch is hollow from the inside, indicating the sky or space element. It produces sound when air is blown into it, indicating the presence of air element. The snail had this as its dwelling, indicating the fire element because it is this fire that helps a creature to live. The conch is formed in water and not on dry land like trees and terrestrial animals—indicating its origin in water element. The body of the conch is hard calcium like the rocks and solid surface of the earth, indicating the presence of earth element as its integral part.

The vehicle of Narayan or Vishnu is the bird called Garud (eagle or heron), and it symbolises the faculty of speech. This is because a man's wisdom and erudition are known when he speaks. Speech and the spoken words give 'wings to a man's ideas'; his inner thoughts are made known to others only when he speaks. Words and ideas are transmitted from one person to the other like the bird flying off from one tree and perching on another. That is why speech is likened to the bird. Garud is regarded as a personification of the knowledge contained in the Vedas because this knowledge is transmitted through the means of speech. Besides this point, there is another way of looking at this aspect. The knowledge contained in the Vedas help a wise man to reach his spiritual destination much like Lord Vishnu employing the services of Garud if he wants to go any place.

Narayan or Vishnu is said to recline on the bedstead of *Sheshnath* or the legendary serpent of thousand hoods. The word 'Shesh' means 'leftover or remainder'. At the time of conclusion of creation, 'something' remains from which the new creation would come into being. This 'something' is the 'seed' represented by Shesh. So Sheshnath represents the sum total of all the souls in their subtle forms which have been leftovers from the previous generation or cycle of creation, hibernating and waiting for the opportune time to remerge as a new creation. In this context, the Kshirsagar or the ocean of celestial milk called Amrit, upon which this Sheshnath floats, is like the preservative ambrosial fluid which sustains life and gives it nourishment during the time it is in hibernating phase before the commencement of new creation or springing forth of a new generation of living organisms.

Lord Vishnu has one of his names as *Vasudeo* because he is the sustainer and protector of creation, signifying his lordship over all the essential elements in Nature, called the Vasus of which there are eight in number, created to help sustain the forthcoming creation.

The Yogtattva Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 2 describes Vishnu as a Maha-Yogi, Maha-Bhut and Maha-Tapa.

The Subalo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its Canto 6 also describes the omnipresent and all pervading form of Narayan. The *Paingalo-panishad* of the Shukla Yajur Veda, in its Canto 1, verse nos. 6 and 10 describes Vishnu in the context of the genesis of creation.

Vishnu appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda—1/154-156; 5/3/3; 7/99/1-3; 7/100; Sam Veda—222; 1625-27; Yajur Veda—5/15; 6/4; Atharva Veda—3/27/5.

²The word Pran refers to the vital winds that not only infuse life in the gross body but also sustains it. This Pran is the all important 'breath' which is like the spark of life in this creation, for without Pran no life is imaginable. When the creator created the gross body of the creature in his likeness he found that this body showed no signs of life—i.e. it did not move, it did not talk, it did not showed any other signs of life. So the creator 'breathed life' into this lifeless and inert body lying like a dead piece of log on the ground. This 'breath of life' is Pran. The word henceforth came to be synonymous with

all the other vital winds that lend life to the living being. There are five main vital winds and they are Pran (breath), Apaana (the wind that controls digestion and excretion), Samaana (wind responsible for circulation and equal distribution of nourishment in the body), Vyan (wind which maintains equilibrium), and Udaan (which helps the body to get up and move about).

³At the very beginning of creation there was no sign of 'life', or any kind of other activity. There was complete quiet and calmness. The 'one who was present then', i.e. one who existed even before the rest of the creation came into being, is called Brahm or the Supreme Being. Since nothing can come into being without the existence of some primary source, because matter and energy can only change their form and nature but simply cannot appear from thin air, it follows that there must have been some 'source' from which the rest of the creation evolved. This 'source' was the one point where everything collapsed at the time of the end of the previous creation, only to emerge at the proper time as a new creation. Again, since only something which is inherently alive and has latent energy present in it can show signs of life and activity, since only something which is conscious and intelligent can 'think' and make 'decisions', the fact that Narayan 'thought' that he must start creation, and then went about 'actually doing' it proves that he had consciousness and intelligence even prior to the emergence of living creatures. He pre-dated and post-dates this creation. The concept of creation has been elaborately described in a number of Upanishads. To summarise—(a) Rig Veda tradition—Aiteriyo-panishad; Mudgalo-panishad, Canto 2-4; (b) Sam Veda tradition—Chandogyo-panishad, Canto 3, Section 19; Canto 4, Section 17, verse nos. 1-3; Canto 6, Section 2-10; (c) Shukla Yajur Veda tradition—Trishikhi Brahmin, Canto 1; Painglo-panishad, in its Canto 1 and Canto 2; Subalo-panishad, Canto 1-8; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 1-2, 4-5; Canto 6, Brahman 4; (d) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Panch Brahm Upanishad; Kath-rudra Upanishad, verse nos. 17-26; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 4; Canto 5, verse no. 5; Canto 6, verse no. 1-3; Taittiriyo-panishad, Valli 1, Anuvak 7; Valli 2, Anuvak 1-2 and 7; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 10-11; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 8-12; Shaarirko-panishad; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 20-23.

⁴*Prajapati*--Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 4/11-13, and 5/3 of Krishna Yajur Veda states that the Supreme Being who created this world had also created the different *Prajaptis* to take care of this world. The 'Prajapati' is the guardian of the world appointed by the supreme creator to take care of the mundane affairs of running the world. They have taken two forms—one that of the *Gods* at the cosmic level, and the other that of the *Manus*, the first humans, at the level of this mortal existence on the earth.

There are *twenty four Devtas or Gods*, and they are the following—Aagneya (Fire), Prajapati Brahma, Soma (Moon), Isha, Savitri, Aditya (Sun), Bhrihaspti, Varun, Bhag-dev, Aryamaa-ishwar, Ganesh, Twastaa, Pushaa, Indra, Vayu, Vamdeo, Maitraa-Varun Dev, Vishva-dev, Maatrikaa, Vishnu, Vasu-Dev, Rudra Dev, Kuber and Ashwini.

The *fourteen Manus* of mythology, who were the forefathers of the entire creation, are the following—(i)Swaayam or Swaayambhuva, (ii) Swaarochisa, (iii) Aautami or Uttam, (iv) Taamas, (v) Raiwat, (vi) Chaakshush, (vii) Vaivaswat, (viii) Savarni, (ix) Daksha Savarni, (x) Brahm Savarni, (xi) Dharma Savarni, (xii) Rudra Savarni, (xiii) Dev Savarni or Ruchi/Raucha Savarni, and (xiv) Indra Savarni or Bhaum.

'Vaivasvat or Vaivaswat Manu' is the 7th Manu and the legendary progenitor of the current living beings on this earth. The word 'Vaivaswat' means coming from the Sun or belonging to the Sun, or relating to or belonging to Yam (the God of death and a judge of a creature's deeds done by it during the life time). It also means the planet Saturn as well as one of the Rudras. In the present context of this text, Sri Ram means the Vaivaswat

Manu who is the forefather of the human race in general and Sri Ram's ancestor in particular because he belongs to the Solar race.

The word 'Swayambhu' refers to the primal man represented by the creator Brahma as well as the Viraat Purush who were both born from the Lord called Narayan who is deemed to be their father. Swayambhu was the male aspect of creation, and his female counter part was Mother Nature. The word means 'someone who was born out of his own free will'. So, Viraat Purush and Brahma are generally regarded as Swayambhu, because both were born out of their own free will as a manifestation of Brahm. 'Swayambhu Manu' was the first male born on earth and from him the rest of the creation was born.

The word 'Swayambhu' also means 'self existent' and refers to Brahm, while 'Swayambhu Manu' is Brahma, the Prajapati or the Lord and sustainer of the subjects of this creation; he is a representative of the Male aspect of creation, the Viraat Purush, and is primal male par excellence; he is the divine father of the human race. The name 'Manu Swayambhu' is especially applied, in the context of the Purans of which Ramayan is a part, to fourteen successive mythical progenitors and sovereigns of the earth and who create and sustain this world through successive long period of time called 'Kalpas'. The first such mythical progenitor is known as 'Manu Swayambhu' as the one who sprung (created or manifested) from the self-existent Brahm. He is regarded as a secondary creator who commenced his work of creating by producing 10 Prajapatis, of whom the first was 'Light' called Marichi. To this Manu is ascribed the celebrated code of conduct called 'Manu Smriti' and two other ancient Sutra work on Kalpa and Grihya, i.e. the sacrificial and domestic rituals. He is also known as Hiranyagarbh and Prachetas.

The other five Manus are called Swarochish, Uttam, Taamas, Raivat and Chakshush. The 7th Manu is called Vaivasvata Manu the son of the Sun God, and he is regarded as the progenitor of the present race of living beings. He is like the Noah of the Old Testament of the Holy Bible, is said to have been preserved by Vishnu or Brahm in the form of the legendary great fish from being drowned in the great deluge of the dooms day. This Manu is also called as one of the twelve Adityas, the author of Rig Veda, VIII, 27-31, as the brother of Yam (the God of death and a judge of a creature's deeds done by it during the life time), as the founder and first king of Ayodhya, and as the father of Ila who married the son of the Moon-God named Budha. This makes two great dynasties — the solar and the lunar races to which Sri Ram and Krishna respectively belonged — related to each other. The 8th Manu, or the 1st of the future Manus according to Vayu Puran, III, 2, will be Savarni, the 9th would be Daksha Savarni, the 10th would be Brahm Savarni, the 11th would be Dharma Savarni the 12th would be Rudra Savarni, the 13th would be Raviya or Deva Savarni, and the 14th would be Bhautya or Indra Savarni.

The life of one Manu is equivalent to roughly 311,040,000 years.

⁵*Adityas*—There are many versions describing these twelve Adityas or mythological Suns as follows—(a) The twelve Adityas are the mythological Suns and appear as patron Gods who (i) take care of the world (Rig Veda, 2/27/4); are like the heads (Taiteriyā Brahmin, 1/2/3/3) and eyes (Jaimini, Uttar. 2/1/2/3) of all the creatures. These twelve Adityas appear first in the Rig Veda 1/41/4-6 and 2/27. They are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods (Atharva Veda, 8/9/21). They are the following— the eight Vasus + Indra + Sun + Vishnu + Shiva = twelve in number.

(b) According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/5, the *twelve months* of the year represent these *twelve Adityas*, one month for one Aditya. In this Upanishad, sage Yagyavalkya draws a parallel between the twelve months of a year and the twelve Adityas for the following reasons—First, with the passage of one complete year, a corresponding number of years are subtracted from the total number of years that a person is supposed to live in this world. That is, death comes so much the nearer to him. The passage of the sun across the sky from dawn to dusk is used as a symbolic way of

depicting the passage of the life of a man from his birth till his death. Since there are twelve mythological suns and twelve months in a year, a parallel is drawn between them and the life of a man.

Second, the whole life of an individual creature as well as the entire creation as a whole depends upon the various seasons that appear in a year. If even one of the seasons is disturbed, the entire cycle of life is disturbed correspondingly. For the smooth functioning of life, all the seasons must appear in a rhythmic and systematic manner, and it is a scientific fact that the seasons, upon which the life on earth is so dependent, also themselves depend upon the sun. That is why the Adityas are termed as being synonymous with the twelve months of the year as well as with the life cycle of creation.

(c) According to Vishnu Puran, the twelve Adityas are the following— Dhata, Arayma, Mitra, Varun, Ansha, Bhug, Indra, Vivaswan, Pusha, Parjanya, Twashta and Vishnu.

(d) Sun God or *Surya*—appears first in the Rig Veda, 1/50. He is one of the chief Gods that sustain life. He is closely related to the Fire God; the Sun is a visible manifestation of the fire element. The sun is regarded as the ‘eye’ of the Viraat Purush. The Sun God watched the deeds done by all the creatures (Rig Veda, 1/50/2). It is like the Atma of all the creatures (Rig Veda, 1/115/1; Shatpath Brahman, 14/3/2/9).

(d) Aditya or the Sun God has been repeatedly regarded by the Upanishads as a manifestation of the Viraat Purush who himself is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm. For example, Chandogya 1/6/3, 5, 6; 1/10/7; 2/9; 2/14; 2/24/12-14; 3/1-11; 3/18; 5/13; 6/4/2 etc.; and Brihad Aranyak 2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9; 3/9/5; 5/15 etc.

⁶*Rudra*—(a) Lord Shiva has eleven forms called Rudras. The eleven Rudras are the various manifestations of Lord Shiva. They are the following:--(i) Mannu, (ii) Manu, (iii) Mahinas, (iv) Mahaan, (v) Shiva, (vi) Ritdwaj, (vii) Ugrareta, (viii) Bhav, (ix) Kaal, (x) Vamdeo, and (xi) Dhritvrat. The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1, and Taittiriya Brahmin 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened.

(b) The eleven Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following—Har, Bahuroop, Trayambak, Aparaaajeet, Shambhu, Vrishakapi, Kapardi, Raivat, Mrigvyadh, Sharva, Kapaali.

(c) Lord *Shiva* has eleven forms, and one of them is *Rudra*, which literally means anger, wrath and vehemence. The Lord is considered to be the most enlightened of the Trinity Gods, and is therefore called *Maheshwar*. He always remains in a meditative posture, always contemplating and meditating on the supreme Soul and the Truth. But still he shows anger and mercilessness, because one of his tasks is to punish the evil and sinful ones by ruthlessly slaying them in order to protect the good and righteous souls in the creation. Further, when his meditation and peace is disturbed he also becomes angry. He remains aloof and disinterested in the world, because he is very wise and enlightened, and he stays in the form of an ascetic. Ordinary people think that he is proud, arrogant and haughty because he does not give a damn to worldly formalities and niceties of behaviour. Shiva's failure to conform to set norms of proper and sane conduct makes him look most odd God. The word ‘Rudra’ is used as a metaphor for anger, wrath, vehemence and cussedness.

⁷*Vasus*—These ‘Vasus’ are the various patron Gods who preside over the essentials of life; they are eight in number—Vishnu is the sustainer, Shiva who is the annihilator, Kuber who is the treasurer of the wealth of the Gods, the Sun, Water, Fire, Wealth represented by gems and gold, and ‘Ray’ representing glory and fame. The element ‘Fire’ is the most potent, prominent and essential force in creation, because without fire the world would freeze to death. Hence, the Fire-God is said to be the chief amongst the

Vasus. The 'fire' element is the active force in creation and is primarily responsible for kindling the cosmic cauldron that set in motion the process, and once having set it in motion it then sustained it and would finally annihilate it by burning it to cinders. On the other hand, Lord Vishnu is the passive force of creation represented by his other form of Viraat Purush which is the primary male aspect of creation. Lord Vishnu, who is the sustainer of the creation, is the Lord of Laxmi who is the Goddess of wealth, and is the supreme creator because Brahma, the old patriarch of creation who created the visible world and its creatures, was himself born atop the divine lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu utilizes the services of Laxmi who is the personification of the active forces of creation to create, sustain and annihilate the world. The Vasus are symbolic Gods who represent those essentials aspects of creation without which life would be difficult to conceive and sustain and finally conclude.

The eight Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolise those primary necessities of life without which existence is not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun God (who provides energy and food) and his rays and radiance (i.e. sunlight and the energy that it provides), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire God (called Agni), (vii) any body of water such as a pond, a river etc., and (viii) holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation). According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following-. Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon, and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets).

According to Purans, the eight Vasus are the following—Dhruv, Dhar, Som (the sap of an elixir-providing plant called Som which is used during religious ceremonies as sanctified liquid offered to the Gods), Aap (water), Anil (wind), Anal (fire), Pratush and Prabhas.

These eight Vasus are the semi-Gods who symbolise the various types of assets needed to sustain this world. They therefore represent such assets as jewels, precious stones and gems, gold and other forms of wealth and property. Vasus also refers to the fire and water elements as well as their grosser forms as the terrestrial fire and water bodies such as ponds and lakes; to the virtue of radiance, splendour and glory; to the ray of light; to Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), Shiva, Sun, Vishnu, and a simple and pious gentleman.

⁹The *Rig Veda*—The word Veda is derived from the root 'vid' meaning 'to know; to be enlightened; to be aware and learned'. Therefore, the Vedas represent the vast body of esoteric and sacred knowledge concerning eternal spiritual values and metaphysical matters regarding the Absolute Truth and Reality of creation. They were revealed to great sages and seers during their meditation and contemplation sessions. The Vedas are the highest canonical literature in Hinduism.

The Vedas are called 'Srutis' because they were orally transmitted and were 'heard' from one generation to another.

The Rig or Rik Veda is the first and the oldest of the Vedas. The other Vedas are—Sam Veda, Shukla Yajur Veda, Krishna Yajur Veda, and Atharva Veda.]

2. The different directions of the celestial globe (i.e. the north, east, south and west) are the different revelations of the same divine Lord known as Narayan. The angular directions (lying between the four cardinal points—such as northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest) are also manifestations of Narayan (for the same reason). Narayan is the Zenith (the upper point; the apex) and the Nadir (the bottom; the lowest

point). Narayan is the inside and the outside of everything. [In other words, there is no location in the entire creation where one would not find Lord Narayan because he is immanent, omnipresent, all-pervading, all-incorporating and all-encompassing. Not only this, whatever that exists in this creation is one or the other form of Narayan. Nothing exists that is not Narayan.]

Verily, this is what the Yajur Veda¹ asserts and affirms; this is what it teaches; this is the profound doctrine enshrined in this Veda (2).

[Note—¹The *Yajur Veda*—The word ‘Yajus’ means a liturgy of hymns chanted during the fire sacrifice. The Yajur Veda has been classified into Krishna and Shukla branches.]

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5. (j) The Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad:--

(Verse nos. 47, 58-59)

“Verse no. 47 = The Prakriti (Nature) was created or produced by a combination of the three primary qualifications called Sata, Raja and Tama Gunas. [These are the basic qualities that determine the nature and temperament of all creatures. All living beings have them in varying proportions. The Sata is the best and most auspicious quality that makes a man spiritually inclined. The Raja makes him tend to veer towards the tendency to move towards the world with the intentions to expand and acquire fame and name. The Tama is the meanest of the three qualities which make a man mean and of a low mentality. The personality and character of any man is decided by the ratio of these three basic qualities.]

Just like an image forming in a mirror appears to be very true, life-like and almost identical to the object of which it is a reflection (if one is unaware that what one sees in this mirror is merely an image and not the real thing), the reflection of the consciousness in the mirror of Nature appears to be identical to the original cosmic Consciousness. [The nature of a man is already said to be tainted by the three Gunas as stated above. When the consciousness is seen through this veil, it is obvious that these three Gunas would cast their affect on the real form and nature of the consciousness and it would be tainted by them. So though the primary consciousness is pristine pure, incorrupt and immaculate, its version as seen in living creatures appears to be tainted due to presence of the various Gunas that are invariably present in all living creatures as their inherent character and nature. See verse no. 48 below.] (47).

“Verse no. 58 = The fault known as ‘duality’ which creates an impression of existence of two distinct entities separated from one another in something which is actually one and indivisible is applicable to this artificial world and not to Brahm. [That is, only in this physical gross world do we see two different types of creatures, such as for example a horse and a cow. In essence, what is known as the horse and a cow is the physical gross

body, but the basic factor that infuses life in both of them is the ‘Pran’ and the ‘Atma’ which are the life-giving vital winds and consciousness respectively that are the same in both. The horse and the cow would both feel the same degree of pain when hurt. For that matter, a wise man realises that the pain felt by these animals would be the same which he would feel himself when similarly hurt. The gross body is perishable and changeable, but the Pran and the Atma are immutable and the same in all creatures. It is the conscious Atma that makes one feel any sort of pain instead of the body because the latter has no life of its own but depends upon the Atma to be alive; a dead body has no feeling of pain or happiness. Similarly, Brahm is only one and a non-dual, immutable and indivisible divine entity, whereas the physical forms that this Brahm takes when it revealed itself in the form of the vast creation has countless and varied forms. But a wise man sees this non-duality everywhere inspite of the visible illusion of duality.]

This creation has five quintessential components—viz. Asti (that which ‘is’), Bhaati (that which ‘appears to be’), Priya (that which is ‘dear’ and ‘gives pleasure’), Roop (that which has a physical ‘form’), and Naam (that which ‘has a name’) (58).

“Verse no. 59 = Out of these five quintessential parts of creation, the subtle components such as Asti, Bhaati and Priya are applicable to Brahm, while Roop and Naam are the two components of the visible world.

When the essentially sublime, transcendental and supreme divinity known as Brahm who is characterized by the glorious virtues of truthfulness, consciousness, beatitude and felicity assumes some kind of gross Roop (gross form having a physical dimension) and Naam (a name that is applied to the physical form), then the same Brahm becomes metamorphosed into and known as the ‘world’ (59).

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5. (k) **The Pancha Brahm Upanishad:--**

[This Upanishad is one of the revealed ones as it was first preached by Lord Shiva to sage Gaalav (refer verse no. 33). Later on, this metaphysical knowledge was passed on in the form of a discourse that was given by sage Pippalaad when he was approached by sage Shaakalya with the question—‘what or who was produced in the beginning of creation’ (verse no. 1).

The entire creation is envisioned as a three dimensional complex matrix made up of five primary elements that are divided and sub-divided into a crystal-lattice structure having different levels or planes of grossness or subtlety. There is no clear delineation between any two units of this crystal; it is not possible to draw a clear line to demarcate the elements and their divisions and sub-divisions so much so that each unit of this matrix is indistinguishable from the other as they subtly merge into one another to give a homogenous nature to the entire structure. This crystal-lattice like arrangement of the various components of creation ensures that there is one primary and supreme entity at the center of the entire structure, and it is called Brahm or pure cosmic Consciousness. Around this central core there is a complex structure of various manifestations of this

single Brahm which in simple terms would mean the same Brahm appearing in different forms depending upon the spiritual perspective from which it is viewed. It is like seeing the same crystal from different angles.

We can view this creation as a vast empire divided into five primary states with almost independent Kings, and each of these states again sub-divided into several provinces and districts each with its own headquarters and chieftain, having certain degree of operating independence. But inspite of this hierarchy and structured feature, all the units owe their allegiance the single Emperor and are deemed to be ruled over by him; they must obey his orders and proclamations. They are all under the overall command and supervision of the Emperor. It is this Emperor who is central to the administrative hierarchy resembling a pentagon with five subordinates under him, here called the five primary Gods, who guard the five cardinal points of the empire, here symbolising the entire creation. All these Gods are actually operating on behalf of Brahm, and are deemed to have unquestioned authority over the realm under their domain. From metaphysical view point, Brahm had revealed himself into five primary elements, and as creation evolved and progressed, these elements representing Brahm had assumed various levels of grossness or subtlety, and had acquired various names, external features, special characteristics and defining attributes depending upon the needs of the situation and circumstance. But they are nevertheless the same non-dual Brahm revealed in each of these forms, they are all the same Brahm playing different roles—this is the essence of the philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta, the doctrine of ‘non-duality’.

Now according to this Upanishad, Brahm had first revealed itself into the five principal Gods, and then each of them had metamorphosed into more forms which formed the basis of evolution of the complex creation as we know it to be. The five primary manifestations of Brahm are as follows—Saddyojat, Aghor, Vamdeo, Tat-purush and Ishan (verse no. 1). The different forms into which they metamorphosed have been described in detail in verse nos. 5-23.

The five forms are only a matter of perception, for basically they are the same non-dual supreme Divinity revealed in all these forms. An enlightened and wise spiritual aspirant should visualise all these five forms in his own self as the pure consciousness known as the Atma, because the Atma is also a personification of that Divinity, and thereby be rest assured that his ‘self’ is a personification of all these five forms of Brahm.

The fact that there are basically five elements in creation and all of them have any relevance and importance because of the one cosmic universal Consciousness known as Brahm that is present in all of them and which binds them together into a living world that is very vivid, lively, dynamic and vibrant entity is behind the naming of this Upanishad as ‘Panch Brahm’—i.e. the five forms of Brahm. Everything that exists has this five-faced Brahm at its core, as its essence, as its heart, as its soul or Atma. Each face or aspect of this world is actually one of the other face or aspect of Brahm; without this Brahm, the entire structure would be simply non-existent.

Iconographically, this Panch Brahm is depicted as the five-faced Shiva, called ‘Panchaanana’, symbolising the composite authority and powers of the Supreme Being at one place. The face that is turned towards the zenith is called ‘Ishan’; the one facing north is called ‘Vamdeo’; the one to the east is ‘Tat-purush’; the south facing face stands for ‘Aghor’; and the one to the west side is known as ‘Saddyojat’. This image of Panchaanana Shiva has ten arms, fifteen eyes, is seated on a bull, wears an elephant hide

around the waist and the tiger skin on the upper part of the body, has matted hairs and a tall crown. His weapons are Shakti (thunderbolt), Khatvhanga (a magical wand) and a Trident. He also holds an Akshamala (the prayer rosary), a fruit (symbolising his power to grant boons and blessings), a snake (indicating his fearless and venomous nature that would tolerate no nuisance), a Damaru (the hand held drum indicative of the cosmic Naad, the cosmic primordial sound that existed at the beginning of creation as well as the thunder and rumble of dooms day), and the Utpala flower (a blue species of lotus; *nymphaea cerulean*). The other remaining hands are held in Abhaya Mudra (the posture giving fearlessness to his devotees) and Vara Mudra (the posture that grants boons and blessings).

The Upanishad has 43 verses and concludes with honouring this divine entity known as the Atma as a personification of the Supreme Being known as Brahm, and then goes on to enumerate the spiritual benefits obtained by studying this Upanishad. Like many other Upanishads of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, this Upanishad is also dedicated to Lord Shiva.]

1. Once, when asked by sage Shaakalya¹ ‘what was created first in the beginning of creation’, sage Pippalaad² replied—‘The first revelation of Brahm was called ‘Saddyajat’—meaning the ‘first born’.

Shaakalya asked—‘Is there any other form in which this divine entity (Brahm) revealed itself?’

Pippalaada answered—‘Yes, there is, and it was called ‘Aghor’—literally meaning ‘one who is formidable and awe-inspiring’.

Shaakalya asked again—‘Is there any other form of this revelation?’

Pippalaada replied—‘Yes, it was named ‘Vamdeo’—which is one of the eleven names or forms of Lord Shiva, and which literally means one who is unconventional in all respects, one who is at odds with the established norms and traditions’.

Shaakalya persisted—‘Is there still other forms in which this Divinity revealed itself?’

Pippalaada said—‘Yes, and it was called ‘Tat-purush’—literally meaning ‘that Purush’, or ‘it is that same Purush’, referring to the Viraat Purush or the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm’. [Here it means that all the forms of the revealed cosmic Divinity are nothing but the same Supreme Being in all these manifestations. The Viraat Purush is considered as the invisible, almighty, supreme, all-pervading, all-encompassing and all-incorporating vast and macrocosmic revelation of Brahm. It is from this Viraat Purush that the rest of this creation has evolved.]’.

Finally Shaakalya asked once again—‘Is there any more form of this divine entity?’

Pippalaada replied—‘Yes. There is one more form which is the one that inspires all these other forms of the Gods; or is the cause of all these forms coming into being. That form is called ‘Ishan’—literally meaning an ‘insignia, an emblem and a symbol’, and which is one of the various names of Shiva. [Here it means that all these forms are governed and inspired by the same Supreme Being who is the Lord not only of these divine entities created at the time of creation but also of all and every individual unit of creation that would come into being from these initial revelations from that time onwards.

Since the Gods are supposed to rule over this entire creation and control all its functions, it follows that this first-born God, i.e. the Viraat Purush or the Tat-purush, is the de facto supreme Authority that is the deemed Lord of creation. This revelation of Tat-purush embodies all the stupendous powers and magnificent overriding authority of the cosmic Consciousness called Brahm from which all the different units of creation have emerged. This first born image of Brahm had all the authority, majesty and powers of Brahm inherently present in it; it was a symbol of Brahm's supremacy, authority, divine powers and cosmic might.]

This form of Brahm is the lord and ruler of the entire creation—the past as well as the future. It is the almighty Lord God of all in existence³ (1).

[Note--¹Sage *Shaakalya*—He was called *Shaakalya Vidagdha*. The appendage 'Vidagdha' means one who is arrogant and haughty. He was so arrogant that he enjoyed breaking the words of the Sanhitas (i.e. the collection of Vedic hymns) of the Rig Vedas as mentioned in Nirukta-6/28. Hence he was also known as 'Padapaathkaar'—one who relishes breaking or unnecessarily finding faults with Vedic Sanhitas. Therefore he must have been an expert grammarian. His arrogance and haughtiness proved to be his undoing because this is the precise reason why he was killed as a result of a curse of sage Yagyavalkya in the court of king Janak when *Shaakalya* tried in vain to defeat Yagyavalkya in metaphysical debate as mentioned in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahmin 9, verse no. 26 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. Yagyavalkya's annoyance with him is evident in the preceding verses—3/9/18, 25. This establishes the time of this great sage as being in the Treta Yuga, the second era of the Hindu 4-era celestial cycle. It was the era when Lord Vishnu had incarnated as Lord Ram who married Sita, the daughter of the enlightened king Janak referred to in the above cited Upanishad.

Notwithstanding this negative trait in his character, it is nevertheless true that *Shaakalya* was a sincere student of the Upanishads and one of the most respected sages of his time. He never hesitated in approaching other contemporary sages and seers to quench his thirst for knowledge as is proved in the present Panch Brahma Upanishad which revolves around the answer which *Shaakalya* got when he approached sage Pippalaada and asked him the question regarding one of the greatest mysteries of existence—'What came into existence in the beginning of creation?'

²Sage *Pippalaada*—This sage perhaps got his name as he might have been used to eating a lot of Pipal, the fruit of the Pipal tree (the Indian Fig—*ficus religiosa*) or a kind of long pepper called by this name. He was a great teacher of metaphysics, a master of the doctrine of the Upanishads, and one of the greatest exponents of their philosophy. He has taught many sages and seers of the period, such as *Skaakalya* in the present case, wherein he describes the fundamental unity of creation and affirms that the five forms in which the Divinity exists are basically the revelation of the same Lord, and to the six sages Sukesha, Shaibya and others in the Prashna Upanishad of Athara Veda tradition wherein he answers their six questions to their satisfaction. He was taught about the spiritual wisdom pertaining to the life after death by Nachiketa who had himself got this knowledge from Yam, the God of death, as narrated in Katha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda. Pippalaada was present on the bed of arrows on which Bhishma, the legendary patriarch of the epic Mahabharat period, lay prior to his death when he had taught wisdom to Yudhisthir. [Refer Mahabharat, Shanti Parva, 47/9.] This shows that Pippalaada was a contemporary sage of the Mahabharat period.

When the two facts—one, that the Panch Brahm Upanishad was preached by him to *Shaakalya* who had died in the court of king Janak, the great scholarly king of the Treta era of Hindus, during a debate with the great sage Yagyavalkya when the latter cursed

him for being arrogant and haughty of his knowledge as well as for showing irreverence and impertinence as narrated in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahmin 9 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, and second, that Pippalaada was present in the Mahabharat war period that occurred in the later half of the third era called Dwapar, the era of Lord Krishna, it is easy to conclude that this sage had a very long life, easily straddling at least two eras, i.e. the Treta (Ram's era) and Dwapar (Krishna's era) if not three, i.e. Sat Yug which was the first era, till Dwapar Yug which was the third era.

It is believed that he was the son of Dadhichi and his wife Suvarka. The wife of Pippalaada was called Padmavati. His son was known after him as Pippalaadi, and he was taught by the great sage Jabal which forms the text of the Jabal Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition. It is a mythological legend that he had ordained Shani, the malefic God who casts evil eye, to spare children below 12 years.

The Padma Puran describes another sage with this name who had become very arrogant because of special powers that he had acquired due to Tapa (severe austerity and penance), but later he was chastised by the creator Brahma. (Refer Padma Puran, Chapters 60-62.)

³Basically, this Upanishad, like all of them without exception, espouse the doctrine of one non-dual Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness which is the only single point source, the fountainhead from which all that exists, whether visible or invisible, whether small or colossus, whether consequential or inconsequential, have come into being, and into which they would collapse to dissolve and merge once and for all, leaving no trace, at the time of conclusion. All the forms of Divinity mentioned in this verse are but one or the other form of this singular Brahm. If the five words used to name them are studied carefully, we come to the conclusion that they are simply epithets to describe one or the other aspects of this single cosmic divine entity. For example, 'Saddyojat' means the 'first born' and as such would refer to the Hiranyagarbha which preceded the Viraat Purush. This Hiranyagarbha is the subtle body of the supreme Brahm at the macro level of creation, and it is from this that the Viraat Purush representing the gross body of Brahm at the macro level of creation was born. The word 'Tat-purush' on the other hand refers to 'that Purush', 'that Supreme Being' who is envisioned as a cosmic Male, the Viraat Purush, who, according to Vedanta, is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm. This Viraat Purush is known by different names, for instance as Vishnu, and various other names. Since the rest of the creation has emerged from this single Viraat Purush, it follows that even the Gods have emerged from him—a matter of fact as even Brahma, the creator, had emerged from the navel of Vishnu atop a divine lotus sprouting out of it, and it is this Brahma who had created everything else that exists in this world.

In essence, the idea is to understand the basic tenets and doctrines enshrined in the philosophy of the Upanishads and decipher their hidden spiritual and metaphysical meaning in the correct perspective, in the correct context, and with the correct wisdom, not allowing oneself to get bogged down getting too confused by the perplexities created by numerous versions of the same eternal Truth as espoused by various philosophers who had interpreted and explained it in different ways, or as presented by the various Purans and later day interpretations of the primary scriptures. For instance, according to the various versions in the Purans, the single Hiranyagarbha (the cosmic subtle body of Brahm) is known by different names—such as Brahma the creator, or as Vishnu the sustainer, and even as Shiva the concluder. Then there are instances in the Krishna Yajur Veda Upanishads themselves when Lord Shiva is treated as the Supreme Being himself, and the other two Gods of the Trinity, i.e. Brahm and Vishnu, as manifestations of Shiva. There are instances when the Viraat is sometimes called Brahma and at other times as Vishnu, leading to a lot of confusions. The word 'Purush' literally refers to a 'male', and hence all the primary Gods of creation who are deemed to be revelations of

the Supreme Being known as Brahm are in male form. The basic idea is that there is no basic difference between any of these forms of Brahm; these different forms are just a way adopted by the same Supreme Being to delineate his own authority into separate segments so that the working of the creation can be carried on in a clock-work like precision without overlapping of functions and clash of authority. For example, Brahm in his manifestation as Brahma the creator performed the task of creation, as Vishnu oversaw the proper upkeep of what had come into existence, and as Shiva ensured that things remained in check and old order paved the way for new by ending the old, or causing its death, so that space can be made for the newer, brighter and more developed forms of creation to come into existence and have adequate place to establish it. This is why we say that the creation 'evolves' and 'develops' and 'grows' because the older order gives rise to newer, better, more developed and more adoptable generation. This progression is at the core of the theory of 'evolution of species'.

Now, let us analyse the significance of each of these names. The first revelation of Brahm is known as *Saddyojat*—the 'first one'. Now, at the macrocosmic level of creation from the Vedantic view this would refer to the Hiranyagarbha, the subtle body of Brahm, and from the Puranic view as Brahma the creator from whom the rest of creation was created. In physical terms it would be represented by the 'earth' element because whatever was created first needed a base to stand upon and be established. Therefore, *Saddyojat* refers to the powers of Brahm to create and make a beginning. Iconographically, this form is represented by the face of Shiva facing west. This form has been described in verse nos. 5-6 of this Upanishad.

The second form of Brahm is called *Aghor*, the formidable and awe inspiring one. He symbolises the power of the water element and rules over it—i.e. he is the Lord who is not only responsible for preservation and nourishment of the creation just like water which also shows this grand virtue of sustenance, preservation, nourishment and protection of life, but the irony is that the same water can be ferocious, devastating and uncompromising when it decides so. This fearful and unforgiving nature of water is evident when one considers the severity of damage caused by severe ocean tsunamis, floods and storms like those that would occur during the time of the dooms day, or like the ones that have already been witnessed in recent years when they have wiped out entire towns and villages and caused widespread havoc. In other words, the *Aghor* Brahm symbolises the preservative forces of Nature represented by the water element on the one hand, and at the same time reserves the power and authority to conclude its own creation mercilessly should it decide to do so. Iconographically, *Aghor* Brahm's face points towards the south because in the context of the Indian land mass the vast Indian Ocean is to the south of the country. This form has been described in verse nos. 7-9 of this Upanishad.

The third form is known as *Vamdeo*—basically because Lord Shiva's general demeanours are unconventional and at odds with the way the world normally likes to live. He is a renunciate par-excellence and lives completely submerged in perpetual meditation, not at all bothered by the formalities, the niceties and the attractions of this material world. This life style would be treated as unconventional and odd by the less-enlightened creatures of the world who remain submerged, neck-deep, in enjoying the material comforts and pleasures of this world. So it is natural they would call him 'Vamdeo'—the odd, weird, strange, unconventional and an anomalous form of God. This would be very evident if Shiva is compared with Vishnu and Brahma, the other two Gods of the Trinity. Vishnu is very much involved in the upkeep of this world because it is part of his duties—as he is the protector, sustainer, preserver and nourisher of this creation. Brahma also remains neck-deep involved in this creation—because had it not been so he would never have explored means to create creatures who would copulate to propagate

themselves. It is only Shiva who remains aloof from this swamp. Further, the word 'Shiva' itself means 'one who is auspicious, beautiful, truthful, enlightened and eternal'. Iconographically, the face of Shiva pointing to the North is called Vamdeo. This form of Brahm is a symbol of the fire element and stands for the power to purify, to clean, to absorb, to embrace everything that comes in contact with it and to burn all their impurities just like the fire that burns all impurities and brings out the inherent natural shine in an entity besides accepting everything that is offered to it, whether it is pure or impure. This ability of the fire to purify and clean things is made evident when impure gold is heated before its impurities can be removed. In the philosophy of Yoga, the heat generated by various exercises is able to burn all the impurities present in the body that impede its normal functioning, thereby making the body healthy and robust. When a spiritual aspirant does Tapa, i.e. when he observes severe penances and austerities, the heat generated by this practice also helps to burn all his spiritual garbage and clean his 'self', his soul, and prepares the way for his salvation and emancipation. This form of divine Brahm is said to rule over the fire element, and has been described in verse nos. 10-14 of this Upanishad.

The fourth form is called *Tat-purush*—literally 'that Purush', the cosmic Male form of Brahm known as the Viraat Purush at the macro level of creation. At the physical level, it is represented by the air element because the Viraat Purush is all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresent and omnipotent like the air element which also possesses these virtues. Iconographically, he is depicted as facing east—primarily because the wind blowing from east to west across the plains of India, phenomenon known as the Monsoon in the Indian sub-continent, which sucks in the moisture-laden rain clouds from the ocean and transforms them into life-sustaining rains in the context of the Indian land mass. This rain is like the divine 'sperm' provided by the Supreme Being to infuse life and vitality on earth and is a synonym for rejuvenation and vibrant life forms. This form of Brahm is described in verse nos. 15-18 of this Upanishad.

Finally, the fifth form of Brahm is the best and the most exalted form known as *Ishan*—literally the form which is symbolically the flag bearer, the symbol and emblem of Brahm's supreme sway over the entire creation as well as a mark of Brahm's unequivocal, irrefutable and unalienable power and authority over it. The only God who has been called 'Maha Dev'—the Great Lord—in the scriptures is Shiva; even Vishnu and Brahma do not have the privilege to be honoured by this title. Therefore it follows logically that this supreme Authority is Shiva. *Ishan*—which is Shiva's one name—is also called Sadaa Shiva, the eternal, auspicious and truthful Being; he is the one who gives liberation and deliverance to the creature and lives high in the citadel of the Zenith where the legendary heaven is said to be situated. At the micro level of creation, this form of Brahm refers to the sky element which harbours each single unit of creation that exists, as nothing lives outside 'space'. This face of Shiva has been depicted iconographically in images as facing upwards—towards the Zenith, signifying the highest level of spiritual quest and the most exalted nature of this form of Brahm. The allusion to the sky element also symbolises this citadel along with the fact that one who lives high up in the sky is the senior most God who rules over and controls the entire creation from his high abode, i.e. the Zenith or heaven. Further, the sky is regarded as the subtlest of the five elements of creation and the nearest analogue to Brahm. This form of Brahm is described in verse nos. 19-23 of this Upanishad.

The reader is advised to refer also to Kalagni Rudra Upanishad, verse no. 3 of Krishna Yajur Veda.

It would be interesting to note that the five elements mentioned here are listed in the increasing order of subtlety—e.g. the 'earth' element is the grossest and so is at the bottom of the pile, while the 'sky' is the subtlest and at the top. The other three elements

such as 'water', 'fire' and 'air' are in between them with the grossest of the three, i.e. the 'water', being closest to earth, followed by the less gross and more subtle 'fire' element which leaps up towards the sky when lighted indicating its natural propensity to go higher towards the sky indicating its subtler and lighter nature as compared to that of the water element. Finally there is the 'air' element which is so subtle that it fills the entire space of the sky, almost having the same degree of subtlety as the sky element. It would be noted here that water too has a tendency to go up and higher in the sky, but only in its lighter form as steam and water vapour, and not as a liquid that is earth-bound in rivers, oceans and wells etc. The water that the clouds carry is moisture, and it goes up not on its own account but because it is whipped and pushed up by its companion called the wind element when it lashes the surface of the oceans and seas. Since the earth is the grossest there is nothing below it, and since sky is the subtlest there is nothing beyond it, nothing transcends it!

The Saddyojat form of Brahm is related to the earth element because it is the earth that harbours life in all its vibrant forms; it is the 'mother' of all creation; it is the symbolic 'creator' of the gross visible world. The earth harbours the secrets of life in its vast bowls, it fosters and nourishes life, and everything living in this world would ultimately die and merge into this earth. This is a metaphoric way of saying that everything originates in Brahm, is nourished and sustained by Brahm, and would finally collapse into and coalesce into Brahm.

Next comes the water element. Earth could not have produced anything without the aid of the miraculous ability of water to initiate, and then sustain and nourish life. Prior to appearance of plant and animal kingdoms on the surface of earth there was only water; water came before life came. This stupendous and miraculous ability of water is represented by Brahm in his Aghor form—the formidable and awe-inspiring power to create, sustain and conclude, all rolled into one supreme Authority.

The third form of Brahm is Vamdeo and it is represented by the fire element. The word 'Vam' has a negative connotation in Sanskrit and it generally refers to an entity that is opposing in nature, that is at odds with the usual temptations and worldly charms that are part of Nature's attempt of keeping the wheel of creation and destruction rotating endlessly. Brahm is 'Vamdeo' because as the fire element he is uncompromising and unforgiving by nature. He is opposed to all forms of inauspiciousness, unrighteousness and evil, and punishes those who are evil and sinful. These virtues of Brahm are reflected in the fire element because on the one hand the fire spares none, it would burn everything that comes in contact with it without a second thought as to its worthiness or unworthiness, but on the other hand there is a subtle positive side or aspect to this negative tendency of the fire to burn relentlessly and indiscriminately—it purifies an entity and burns its impurities as proved by the fact that gold is purified by putting it into fire. In ancient tradition, a man's truthfulness was proved if he could subject himself to the rigorous 'fire test' as was done by Sita, the honourable wife of Lord Ram, at the end of his war with the demon king Ravana in the epic story of Ramayan. So, the fire element exhibits both these characteristics of Brahm—to be indiscriminating and uncompromising in its punishment on the one hand, and purifying and cleaning on the other hand. This is in addition to the universal fact that the fire element is the most revered and pure form of creation, and the deity representing the fire, the Fire God, is also the most feared, most powerful and the most holy amongst the pantheon of Gods.

The fourth element is the air or wind element representing Brahm as the Viraat. The word 'Viraat' means vast, colossus, infinite and large. It refers to a macrocosmic entity that fills everything in creation and from which every imaginable form of life has emerged. The Upanishads and Purans dealing with the process of genesis of creation describe how the creation has evolved from this Viraat which is nothing but the

macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm. Now, the other name of the air element is 'Pran', literally meaning the vital spark of life. It is the Pran or the vital winds present inside the body of the living being that keep the otherwise dead body alive and active. The creature's body is a microcosm of the cosmos; it is visible revelation of the Viraat Purush (Aiteriyo Upanishad of the Rig Veda tradition). Since the cosmos is filled with space known as the sky element, and since the air element fills the entire space of the sky, it follows that the vital winds or Pran present inside the body of the individual creature is actually a microcosmic picture of what prevails at the cosmic level. Again since Pran is synonymous with life and is another term used for the air element which fills the vast space of the sky, it is also synonymous with the Viraat Purush because the latter is the all-encompassing and all-pervading gross body of Brahm. Just like the Viraat Purush the air element is central to all forms of life in creation; it pervades everywhere and nothing that lives is outside the purview of the air element. The importance of Pran vis-à-vis other elements of creation has been explained in Chandogya Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition in its Canto 5, section 1, and in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition in its Canto 6, Brahman 1. The air element can be regarded as the Viraat personified to signify the fact that all forms of life sustained by the air element are a visible manifestation of the Tat-purush, 'that Purush'.

The fifth and the last element is the sky—the subtlest of the five. The supreme Brahm has everything implanted in his own self; he bears every single unit of creation; nothing exists outside the parameter of Brahm just like nothing exists outside the boundary of the sky. The sky encompasses and encloses everything in existence just like Brahm, because nothing exists outside of Brahm; every unit of creation is a revelation of Brahm. Since Brahm harbours the entire creation in its own bosom and the sky harbours everything that exists in its space, the analogy is most apt and very evident. This form of Brahm is known as Ishan as it stands for the overriding authority and supremacy of the cosmic Divinity known as Brahm. This sky element is an emblem and insignia of Brahm, and wherever there is sky the presence of Brahm is deemed. This Ishan form of Brahm has his realm spread into infinity because the sky stretches into infinity. Nothing transcends or supersedes Brahm much like the fact that nothing is found beyond the reach of the sky.

The case of one Brahm revealing in so many forms and assuming as many names can be understood if we take a simple everyday example of the 'water' assuming so many forms and names—viz. ocean, river, rivulet, stream, brook, lake, pond, puddle, well, rain, cloud, ice, glacier, vapour, moisture, steam, mist, dew, nectar etc. Then we have the water which is cold, hot, warm, boiling, frigid; water in a cup and a pitcher; water that is salty, sweet, clean, dirty, murky; water that flows in a river, that is static in a pot, that heaves as huge ocean waves, that is boiling in a pan, that is solid as ice and floats as huge glaciers, that is raining from the sky, that is swirling in a whirlpool etc. Taken fundamentally, all of them are nothing but molecules of water consisting of two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen. This basic truth about water would not change in spite of assigning numerous names and epithets to it.]

2. How many classes or sections does it have? How many parts or divisions does it have? How many Shaktis (power, strength and authority) does it have or display? All these things are very mysterious and esoteric, and therefore they ought to be kept secret. [That is, they should not be revealed to unauthorized persons—i.e. it should not be taught to those who are not competent intellectually and lack the required mental abilities and aptitude to comprehend them. This is because such knowledge must be put in the correct hands, for it might prove catastrophic if given to wrong persons just like the secrets of the atom bomb must not be given to an ordinary person, or every Tom, Dick and Harry

cannot be taught the intricacies of the medical science—for a scalpel in the wrong hands would be no less lethal than a knife in the hands of a murderer.] (2).

3. Salutations to that Great Lord (Maha Deva) named 'Maha Rudra' (Lord Shiva) (3).

4. Lord Mahesh—the great God—had first taught this eclectic knowledge (to Pippalaad) (4).

5-6. [These two verses describes the first form of Brahm—Saddyojat.]

Oh Shaakalya! Listen about the most mysterious, enigmatic and esoteric entity that exists in this world—listen carefully. It is known as 'Saddyojat' Brahm.

Every sort of mystical powers and authority that exist in this creation, each single unit of creation, each single factor that make up the pieces of the mosaic that complete the composite picture that is acknowledged as this 'world', is a manifestation of the multifaceted and astoundingly varied personality of the majestic, the stupendous and the supreme cosmic Authority known as the Saddyojat Brahm.

Some of these majestic manifestations of this single Brahm are the following—the Mahi (earth—one of the five elements of creation, the grossest and most evident of the elements; the one which acts as the foundation and base of everything that lives), Pusha (one of the twelve names of Aditya, the Sun God; here symbolising the source of light, heat and energy that injects, fosters and sustains life on earth), Rama (Goddess Laxmi standing for all material wealth in existence), Brahma (the creator of this physical world as well as of the knowledge that exists as he had also created the Vedas which are repositories of all knowledge), Trivit (the triad or triumvirate of creation; the three symbolic corners that enclose the entire creation like the three corners of the triangle—the Trinity Gods such as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, the three Gunas such as Sata, Raja and Tama, etc.)¹, the Swars (notes of sound which form the basis of the spoken word and which are represented by the vowels and nasal sounds of the Sanskrit language), the Rig Veda², the Grihapatya fire (the holy fire lit in each household and is one of the three divine fires)³, the various Mantras (mystical spiritual formulas consisting of syllables, letters, words or phrases having divine powers), the seven Swars (notes of classical Indian music which are used to recite the hymns of the scriptures—viz. Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni), the Varnas (classes in society) such as those who are yellow-complexioned or fair-complexioned⁴, all the activities in this world—called Kriya, as well as the strength, the vitality, the stamina and the ability to carry out these activities—called Shakti symbolising dynamism of Brahm* (5-6).

[Note—¹The *triad or triumvirate* of creation has many connotations as follows—(a) Creation, sustenance and conclusion.

(b) The Trinity Gods—Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder.

(c) The three worlds called Triloki—terrestrial, subterranean and celestial; also the Bhu Loka or the earth where we live, the Bhuvha Loka or the sky immediately above the earth where those creatures which fly live, such as the birds, as well as where the spirits live, and Swaha Loka or the far away heaven where the Gods live.

(d) The three Yugs or Eras —Sat Yug or the age when righteousness and virtuousness was at its zenith, Treta Yug when Lord Ram had made his manifestation, and Dwapar Yug when Lord Krishna came.

(e) The three chief human pursuits —love, wealth and duty.

(f) The three qualities that a creature possesses and which determine his temperament and behavioural pattern —‘Sata’ which is the most auspicious noble and righteous of the three qualities, ‘Raja’ where worldly passion and desire are predominant factors, and ‘Tama’ where lowly qualities marked by perversion, evil and sins are the dominant feature.

(g) The three chief tribes or classes into which the human race was divided by the ancients —the Brahmins who were the learned class, the Kshatriyas who were the warrior class assigned the task of giving protection to the society, and the Vaishyas who did commerce and took care of the societies material needs.

(h) The three primary colours —black, red and yellow.

(i) The three primary scriptures —the Rig Veda, the Sam Veda, and the Yajur Veda.

(j) The Trivikram— the word ‘Tri’ is a prefix meaning ‘three’, and ‘Vikram’ means ‘brave, courageous, bold, heroic, powerful, valorous, valiant, strong, best and excellent’. It also refers to Vishnu because he has all these qualities. According to the Puranic concept, Trivikram refers to Lord Vishnu in his manifestation as the dwarf mendicant called Vaaman who had begged the demon king Baali for land measuring three steps as charity. When Baali had agreed, Vaaman revealed his true identity as Vishnu, who was the Viraat Purush who encompassed the whole creation in his own body. So, in one foot Vishnu measured the whole earth, in the second, the whole sky, and in the third the king’s head was measured, symbolically defeating and subjugating him. So, Trivikram refers to the Viraat Purush or Lord Vishnu from whose navel even the creator Brahma was produced aloft a divine lotus with a long stem, and the holy river Ganges emerged from the toe nails of his divine feet. According to Vedas, this Viraat Purush is a manifestation of the supreme, transcendental, attributeless, all-pervading and all-encompassing authority of the universe, known as Brahm. Rig Veda, 10/90/4, states that this Brahm has three legs (Tri) established in the heavens. The macrocosmic male, called Purush, is its first manifestation; from this Purush came into being this creation consisting of ‘those who eat food’ (the living creatures of the zoological realm) and ‘those who do not eat’ (the plants and vegetables of the botanical realm). These three —the Viraat Purush, the living creatures and the non-living things —formed the three legs of Brahm.

(k) The three Divine Shaktis-- The three cosmic energies referred here pertain to the three forms that the supreme Brahm had taken for the purpose of creation. ‘Brahmi’ is the energy with which Brahma creates, and its relevant subtle counterpart here is the power to wish and aspire for and expect something. ‘Rudrani’ is the cosmic energy by which Shiva/Rudra ends this creation, or brings to a conclusion the creation which Brahma had made possible. ‘Vaishanvi’ is the cosmic energy by which Vishnu sustains and nourishes the creation, and its subtle counterpart is taking actions and doing deeds because without actions and deeds, the creation cannot be sustained. For all these activities—creation, sustenance and conclusion, knowledge, wisdom and intelligence are needed because success in any of these requires the requisite expertise and the ability to use and apply it judiciously.

In other words, Brahma makes this creation possible by wishing to do so in his mind. If the creation is righteous and virtuous, it is sustained and nourished by Vishnu, but if it goes wayward and starts committing evil and sins, Rudra takes charge and uses his energy called 'Rudrani' to destroy that evil part of the creation. Extending this logic further, we deduce that when the evil tendencies in the world will almost eclipse or outweigh the good qualities, Rudra would completely annihilate the creation, but the remnants of good elements left behind will help Brahma to re-start the cycle of creation once again.

The 'triad of powers and strengths' called the Trishaktis that a man possesses are the following—(a) the power to wish and have determination, called 'Ichha-Shakti', because it is only when one wishes to do anything and has the determination to do so that he actually does anything at all and strives hard to get success in it; (b) the power, strength and empowerment obtained as a result of acquisition of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, enlightenment, sagacity, scholarship and expertise. This is called 'Gyan Shakti', simply because merely wish and determination wouldn't suffice if a person does not have the required knowledge and skill, the expertise and wisdom to accomplish his objectives successfully, and (c) the actual ability to carryout his plans to their successful completion, i.e. the ability to do deeds and perform, to take actions and enter into enterprise, called the 'Kriya Shakti', because simply sitting and procrastinating endlessly wouldn't give success unless there is assiduous activity and diligent effort, no matter how wise a man is and how determined he might be. Besides these three, the following are also called Trishakti or the potential powers present in a man— (a) to have influence, impact, affect and sway upon others, (b) to have enthusiasm, zeal, flourish, drive and courage, and (c) to have a good advise in this world as well as the support of divine intercession or intervention of Gods who should be benign and favorably inclined towards him. Further, the three Goddesses— Kali (the black complexioned goddess of war), Tara, and Tripura also known as Tripur Sundari, are also called the Trishaktis, or the divine cosmic energy which has revealed itself in the form of these three divine Goddesses. These Goddesses are the various manifestation of Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva. Parvati is usually referred to by one single epithet— Shakti —which literally means energy, vitality, strength and powers.

(1) The 'Trividya' or the triad of knowledge pertaining to creation has many hues or shades of meanings as follows— (i) It refers to the legendary rewards of righteousness— 'Artha' or material well being and prosperity, 'Dharma' or possessing righteous qualities, being virtuous and noble, and 'Kaam' or being successful in fulfilling all desires; (ii) the creation, sustenance and annihilation of creation; (iii) the three qualities called 'Sata' or noble, 'Raja' or mundane, and 'Tama' or mean and base; (iv) the three classes of society —viz. Brahmin or the learned class who are generally teachers and priests, Kshatriyas or the warrior class, and Vaishyas or the trading and farming class; (v) the three periods of time —the past, the present and the future; (vi) the three states of existence of pure consciousness —the waking state called 'Jagrat', the dreaming state called 'Swapna', and the deep sleep state of existence called 'Sushupta' of the creature; (vii) the three types of bodies of a creature— (a) the gross body consisting of the five organs of perception, e.g. eyes, nose, tongue, ears and

skin, as well as the five organs of action, e.g. the hand, the leg, the mouth, the anus, and the excretory organs, (b) the subtle body consisting of the mind intellect complex, and (c) the causal body consisting of the pure conscious Atma. (viii) The 'Trividya' is that knowledge which is enshrined in the three Vedas— the Rig, the Sam and the Yajur. This Trividya has been dealt widely in the different Upanishads.

(m) According to the revered sage Adi Shankarcharya's commentary on Shwetashwatar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 7, the *three fundamental aspects of the world* which give the latter three distinct characteristic forms are (1) 'Bhokta' or the one who enjoys or suffers, or the consumer who finds pleasure in the objects of this material world as well as the one who has to suffer the consequences of his actions, i.e. the living creature, (2) 'Bhogya' or that which is enjoyed or suffered from, or consumed in one form or the other, i.e. the material objects of this consumable world, and (3) 'Niyantaa' or the one who controls and rules over the other two, i.e. the Supreme Being.

(n) The Triad of Ishwar or the supreme Lord of all that exists, Jiva or the living being or the creature, and Prakriti or Nature—these also form the apex of the triangle which is called the world. [Refer verse no. 9, canto 1 of Shwetashwatar Upanishad.]

(o) According to Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 36, of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, the Supreme Being (Brahm) resides in the Triad of creation. Let us see what this verse says in this connection—"36. A person who is aware of the presence of the supreme transcendental Being, the Supreme Being, in all the three places¹, the three paths², the three forms of Brahm³, the three Akchars or letters⁴, the three Matras⁵, as well as in the 'Ardha Matra' or the half-syllable⁶, is the one who is deemed to be truthfully wise, erudite and enlightened about the fundamental tenets of the Vedas and the essence of their teachings (in the form of the great sayings called the Mahavakyas and other maxims and axioms of the scriptures)."

{¹The *three places* where Brahm resides are the three states in which consciousness exists, viz. the waking state, the dreaming state, and the deep sleep states of consciousness. The three places also refer to the three worlds called Triloki—viz. the terrestrial world represented by the word 'Bhu', the sky above the earth represented by the word 'Bhuvaha', and the heavens represented by the word 'Swaha'. Besides these interpretations, the three places refer to the three planes of time—viz. the past, the present and the future. ²The *three paths* are the following—the two extreme paths, one that leads to his pomp, reputation, glory and fame, and the other that causes just the opposite to happen, leading to his ill-fame, ignominy and degradation, and the third path is the median one of moderation marked by detachment, dispassion and non-involvement. According to some versions, these three paths are represented by the three aspects of the fire sacrifice by which the Supreme Being is worshipped, viz. 'Dhum' or the aspect of the fire sacrifice when there is smoke and much sputtering and crackling of the firewood before it catches fire properly, 'Archi' or the aspect of the fire sacrifice when the flames are burning brightly and brilliantly, and 'Agati' or the concluding part of the sacrifice when some firewood or other offerings remain half-burnt or incompletely burnt, leading to either smoldering pieces of leftovers or the residue of the extinguished fire. ³The three forms of Brahm are the following—the 'Vishwa' representing the gross form of the visible world in which the individual creature lives in his waking state of consciousness, the 'Viraat Purush' representing the gross form of the invisible cosmic parent body in its cosmic plane of waking state from which all the individual creatures of this world have come into being, and 'Brahm or Ishwar' which that entity from which even this Viraat has evolved. Another interpretation of these three forms of Brahm is its manifestation as the Trinity Gods consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector,

and Shiva the concluder. ⁴The *three letters* are the three letters of OM, i.e. A, U and M. These three letters cover in their ambit the entire gamut of creation, viz. 'A' covers birth, 'U' covers growth and development, and 'M' indicated death or conclusion.

⁵The *three Matras* of Brahm are represented by the three phases in which this creation has evolved as a fraction of Brahm. These are called 'Hrasva' or the small beginning indicating the primary forms of life such as algae and fungi, the 'Dirgha' or the most evolved and wide spread form such higher animals and humans, and 'Plut' symbolising the rudimentary forms left after the creation come to the end, or the conclusion of the creation itself. If these are applied to the divine word OM standing for Brahm, then the letter 'A' stands for Hrasva, the letter 'U' for Dirgha, and the letter 'M' for Plut.

⁶The *half-syllable* stands for the incomplete sound of M pronounced at the fag end of saying OM when the mouth is closed, thereby denying the letter 'M' to be pronounced with its full glory with an open mouth as in 'mouth'.}

²There are four Vedas—the Rig is said to be the first, followed by Sam, Yajur and Atharva.

³The *holy fires* are the said to three in number and they are the following—(a) 'Garhyapatya'—the fire of the household hearth; the main fire of the formal fire sacrifice; the fire that every householder is supposed to keep alive and worship regularly and from which the first spark is taken for the rituals associated with religious ceremonies, (b) 'Dakshinagni'—the fire used as a witness to making charities or any other religious festivity; the fire lit at the site of a sacrificial fire ritual, near its south end, (c) 'Ahawaniya'—the fire lit to invoke the Gods during a ritualistic sacrifice. The three aspects of fire are said to be the following—the terrestrial fire that sustains life on the earth, the fire of the heavens which is used by the Gods, and the fire of the nether worlds or hell which is used to punish sinners. Worship of the three important fires have been described in *Chandogya Upanishad*, canto 2, section 24, while canto 5, sections 4-10, 19-24 explain their great symbolic metaphysical significance.

⁴The *Varnas* in the society are the following—The Hindu society has been divided into four sections or classes by ancient sages to regulate its functioning by delegation of authority and clearly specifying the jobs each section is supposed to do to maintain order and system in the world, to prevent overlapping of functions and avoid anarchy and chaos. These four sections are—(a) Brahmins¹—the learned and teaching class; a wise one well-versed in the knowledge of the ultimate Truth about the supernatural Being called Brahm. They also presided over religious functions as priests, because these functions were central to life in the Vedic period; (b) Kshatriyas—they were the warrior, fighting, kingly class. They were assigned the job of giving protection to the society, dispensing justice and maintaining general law and order. (c) Vaishyas—they were the trading and farming class responsible for commerce and wealth generation. They provided for the necessities for a comfortable life. And finally (d) the Shudras —the service class of people whose main function was to free the other three classes from the humdrums of daily chores and concentrate their energies to the particular jobs assigned to those classes to which they belonged. {¹The salient features of Brahmins are the following—they should possess these noble qualities—(1) 'Riju'-be expert in the Rig and the Yajur Vedas, (2) 'Tapa'-should be involved in doing penances, observing austerities and enduring sufferings for the welfare of the soul and the society, (3) 'Santosh'-be contented and satisfied, (4) 'Kshamaa'-to be forgiving and tolerant, (5) 'Sheel'-to have such virtues as good character, dignity, decorum and virtuousness, (6) 'Jitendriya'-to have self control over the sense organs, (7) 'Data'-to be a giver, one who sacrifices his own interests for the benefit of others, (8) 'Gyani'-one who is well learned, wise, enlightened and erudite, (9) 'Dayaalu'-to be merciful and compassionate. [Shatpath

Brahmin.] An entire Upanishad called Vajra-shuchiko-panishad, belonging to the Sam Veda tradition is devoted to the subject. The eclectic virtues of Brahmins have been expounded in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahmin 5 as well as in Canto 3, Brahmin 8, verse no. 10.]

These four classes of the human race were created from the single father, the Viraat or Brahma. Their origins are indicative of the different jobs that they were assigned so as to enable the creator perform the task of governance just like a king assigns separate jobs to his different ministers. But it must be clearly understood here that each class of the human race was like a part of the body of the Supreme Being, and even as a man feels disfigured and handicapped as well as feels the pain equally if his leg is cut off from the rest of his body as he feels when his arm or head is severed, the Lord feels betrayed and hurt when even one of his sons is subjected to humiliation and pain. The four classes had specific jobs cut for them so that the society could function smoothly.

The Brahmins have their origin from the mouth of Brahma the creator. Since the mouth is used to give advice and teach others, the primary job of the Brahmins was to act as moral guide to their brethrens. The four Vedas, which are repository of all knowledge that exist, were also created from the mouth of Brahma; hence these Brahmins were considered most wise and learned. The arms are metaphors for strength and powers; they are used to protect and help others. Hence, the Kshatriyas, who were created from the arms of Brahma, were those sons of his who would give the needed protection and security to their other brethrens. In order to feed his creation, Brahma had to toil and labour to provide for the maintenance and financial and material well being of the society for merely teaching and protecting would not suffice without some one to take care of the other necessities of life. So he created the Vaishyas from his thighs, symbolising labour, to pick up the mantle of mundane affairs of life. But there must be someone who would do the daily chores, such as tilling the fields, doing the harvesting, washing and cleaning, and all other such odd jobs. This was assigned to the Shudras created from Brahma's feet symbolising service.

The reasons for classification has been laid out in Niralambo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 10, which states that—"The skin, blood, flesh, bones and the Atma/soul have no caste, creed, colour or race. These have been conceived as a practical measure to regulate and control our day to day behaviours and interactions with each other."

The Subalo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse 6, and Canto 2, verse 1 describes the origin of these four classes in society.

The Paingalo-panishad of the same Veda, in its Canto 1, verse no. 7 and Canto 2, verse nos. 3, describes how the three basic Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama were used by the supreme Brahm to create different types of creatures in this creation.

None of these classes were meant to be inferior or superior to one another; they were all parts of the body of the same Brahm. See also Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 1/4/11-15 which describes their origin in graphic details, and also Aitereyo-panishad, 1/1/4.

Colour of the skin—It ought to be noted here that the genesis of creation as outlined by the Upanishads describe the colour of the skin of the creatures that came into being. The colour of the skin was used symbolically to indicate the dominance of one or the other of the three basic Gunas, the Sata, the Raja and the Tama, in a particular individual that determines to which class of society he belongs, and which formed the basis of this classification which depend heavily on the quality displayed by an individual to become eligible to belong to one or the other class. The Gunas displayed by him holds a greater importance than his mere birth in a particular section.

For example, in Mantriko-panishad, verse no. 5 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition it is said that Maya, which has created this entire world by its delusion creating powers, has

the following three colours—white (fair; grey; all the light shades), dark (brown, black, yellowish and all shades of colours that are not essentially white) and blood red (or copper colour). Since the offspring gets the colour of the skin of the parent because the colour often is indicative of the race to which a particular species belongs, there would therefore be creatures having these three basic colours in varying hues and shades. Now what is the significance of these three colours? These *three colours* represent the three basic qualities, called Gunas, present in all the creatures. Even as an offspring gets the colour of the skin of the race to which it belongs, the inherent characters of all creatures are inherited from their mother, and this mother is Maya. The white colour stands for the best category of qualities called Sata Guna, the red colour stands for the second and medium quality called Raja, and the dark colour stands for the meanest quality called Tama. The word Tam itself means ‘dark’ and it stands for the worst type of qualities leading to sinful and pervert nature in a man which makes his life hellish; the word ‘red’ is a metaphor for anger, vehemence, vengeance, agitations, restlessness, short temper, strife, hatred, envy, jealousy and the other such negative worldly characteristics in a person; the colour ‘white’ stands for peace, tranquility, prosperity, happiness and wisdom, all of which are the characters of noble and gentlemanly persons. Refer also Shewata-shwatar Upanishad, Canto 4, verse 4-5; Paingalo-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3; Mantriko-panishad, verse no. 5 in this context.

*It would be noted that all the entities listed in these verses pertain to the life on earth. The sun, material wealth, the three Gunas, Brahma the forefather of creation represented by the man, the Rig Veda which was primarily used to do the rituals of the fire sacrifice, the Garhyapatya Agni or the household fire, the Mantra used for rituals etc.—all of them without exception. That is, this form of Brahm, the Saddyojat Brahm, relates to that aspect of Brahm that creates.

See note to verse no. 1.]

7-9. [These three verses describe the second form of Brahm—the Aghor.]

The next form of Brahm is known as ‘Aghor Brahm’. It assumes these forms—Salil (water—the second gross element after earth; the nectar which preserves and fosters life), Chandra (the moon), Gauri (the divine consort of Shiva; the cosmic Mother), the Yajur Veda which is the second Veda, and the Dakshinagni (the fire lit as a witness to making charities and other offerings at the time of conclusion of a fire sacrifice)¹.

Further, this Aghor form of Brahm is dark in complexion and hence honoured by the epithet ‘Nirdhava’ (literally meaning the dark colour like that of the dark rain-bearing cloud). [That is why the Yajur Veda that is being referred to here is the Krishna Yajur Veda which is translated as the dark Yajur Veda.] This Brahm has revealed itself as ‘Swar’ (here meaning the short vowel sounds of the Sanskrit language, such as the letters ‘A’ as in *son* or *sun*, the letter ‘E’ as in ‘*if*’, the letter ‘O’ or ‘U’ as in *full* or *wool*, the letter ‘Ey’ or ‘Ay’ as in *may* or *day*). This aspect of Brahm is called ‘Sandram’ (literally something which is smooth and lubricating; an entity that shows the grand virtues of affection, warmth and friendliness). [In other words, though Brahm depicts dark characteristics as implied by the word ‘Aghor’, it is nevertheless mild and soothing as indicated by the pleasant sounds of the lower vowels as well as the eclectic qualities of being Sandram.] [7].

Besides this, the entire living world which has a certain name and definite attributes, the world with all its characteristic qualities and special features that help to identity and delineate one individual unit of creation from the other, are symbolically encrypted in the fifty alphabets of the Sanskrit language (including the vowels and

consonants). Nothing exists with a name and attribute that does not come within the ambit of these alphabets. All the activities of this world also come within the ambit of the alphabets. [Since the alphabets are the building blocks of the language, everything that can be defined and described must come within this periphery. The visible and mortal world that is describable and definable by words is founded upon single units called the five elements at the physical level of existence, and the alphabets at the subtle intellectual level. Without the alphabets there would be no words, and without words it would be impossible to describe the world meaningfully and intelligently, as well as to classify it into various segments for the purpose of study and analysis. This entire world which is 'visible, known, living, describable and definable by words based on alphabets', the world whose deeds and activities, whose characteristic qualities and virtues can be described and known by the use of words, all the auspicious as well as the inauspicious things in existence that can be clearly explained and cited for future reference—they are all manifestations of Brahm. Since this world is a 'formidable and awe inspiring' proposition, it is indeed the 'Aghor' Brahm revealed in this form. All the Vedas are based on alphabets, and so all knowledge that they represent are also founded on alphabets. Since knowledge can be taught and learned through the medium of the spoken and written words which itself is based on alphabets, it follows that the entire intelligent creation is founded on the alphabets; the latter is central to all forms of erudition, knowledge, wisdom and general expertise that helps to regulate the functioning of this colossal world of immense diversity and variations. It is language that helps a man to share his knowledge and experience with others, it is the intelligible use of words and effective use of any language that distinguishes a man from an animal, and all languages are founded on alphabets. Hence the importance of 'alphabets' as a base of culture, knowledge and intelligent existence cannot ever be over-emphasised.]

This Aghor Brahm is possessed with the stupendous powers to preserve and give protection to those who take his shelter, those who are tormented and seek solace by taking refuge with him. [This form of Brahm has alphabets and water as its manifestation because of two simple reasons. One, good advice and words of wisdom are given by the medium of words which in turn need alphabets and the expertise with language and expression. The spiritual path to liberation and deliverance is shown by the exalted Vedas which are also based on alphabets and words formed out of them. Second, water is a life sustaining and nourishing element, and its association with Brahm as one of its many manifestations is to highlight Brahm's ability to sustain, nourish, preserve and protect all forms of life in this world.]

This Aghor Brahm is able to eliminate all sorts of miseries and fears. He can destroy all evil and malignant forces. He can bestow all the glories and fortunes in the world to the creatures. [This is because a wise man who speaks auspicious words is like a beacon of good hope for the society—removing its miseries, giving solace, helping it to overcome evil and malignant forces, guiding it on the correct path of morality, ethical conduct and good behaviour, as well as generally spreading happiness, a sense of well being and natural goodwill all around.] [8-9]. (7-9).

[Note—¹All these elements of creation and the virtues that they stand for are manifestations of the same cosmic Authority known as Brahm, the Supreme Being. Since the creation has both the good and the bad as its integral part, it follows that on the one hand Brahm is said to be bright as the sun, and on the other hand dark as the darkened

disc of the moon. Now let us analyse each of the epithets used to describe Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, in these verses.

The word *Aghor* means someone who is formidable, fearsome and awe inspiring. All the revelations listed above have an element of 'darkness' inherent in them—the moon has a dark side, the Krishna Yajur Veda is known as the dark (Krishna) Veda, Gauri represents the 'other half', the 'dark half' of Lord Shiva because she represents Maya or the Lord's delusion creating powers, and the lower vowels are a bit muffled sounds as compared to their opposite higher notes or the vowels with a long sound implying that they are not as lively and vibrant as the latter. All these revelations of Brahm are dark in nature in a symbolic way.

Water is known as *Salil*. It is most fearsome and awe inspiring when one sees its ferocious and ruthless form in a deep ocean during severe storms when huge waves rise forebodingly like a wall of death and destruction, or during floods and severe rain-storms on land when water can wipe out entire villages and towns. The dark clouds that thunder, rumble and vent their anger in the form of bolts of lightening are visible manifestations of the darker side of Nature, the quality called *Nirdhava* that Brahm possesses. On the other hand the same water is the well-known nectar of life—soothing, lubricating and rejuvenating, or possessed of the quality of *Sandra* so unique to Brahm. The same thing can be the cause of life in one instance, and the cause of death in another instance. This is the great mystery about Brahm—i.e. it is dark as well as light at the same time. Brahm represents all sorts of forces in existence, both the benevolent ones as well as the malevolent ones. This is because everything that exists is Brahm, and nothing but Brahm.

The *Chandra* (moon) is beautiful to look at, but the same full moon is the harbinger of tides and evil spirits; it is the time when vampires and evil messengers of the night go out on prowl. The dark disc of the moon causes chill in the spine when, for example, one has to cross a dangerous country in the night. Thieves are active during dark nights. No one can rely on the moon for showing direction in the night because not only it changes shape but also its location in the sky—shifting in position every night and even changing its shape and the time of its rising and setting.

The goddess *Gauri*, as the name suggests, is fair complexioned, most affectionate and docile in appearance, but her formidable and merciless nature cannot be underestimated—it was she who had revealed as the most potent of the pantheon of goddesses in her manifestation as goddesses Kaali and Durga, the ferocious slayers of demons in the battle-field. Besides this, Gauri, who represents the 'other half' of Lord Shiva, is Maya or delusions personified, and Maya symbolises darkness. This is the negative aspect of Gauri. On the other hand the same Gauri is regarded as personified Mother Nature in all her glorious splendour and magnificence, the goddess who is the divine Mother from whom the entire creation has took birth, which is definitely a positive aspect of Gauri.

The Yajur Veda has two versions—the dark and the light, called the 'Krishna' and the 'Shukla' respectively. Since our present Upanishad belongs to the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, the Yajur Veda referred to here is deemed to be the *Krishna Yajur Veda*. This Veda is more prevalent in the south of India, and this fact is subtly implied in the second type of fire referred to in this verse, i.e. the 'Dakshinagni Fire'. The prefix 'Dakshin' literally means 'south' in Sanskrit. Further, Lord Shiva has an Upanishad dedicated to him by this name, viz. the *Dakshinmurti Upanishad*, which also belongs to the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. The worship of Lord Shiva is more dominant in the south of India as compared to the north of the country where Lord Vishnu, in his various incarnations, is the more popularly worshipped. This fact that the presiding deity of all the traditions that trace their roots to the south of India is Shiva is exemplified by the mention of the *moon* in the above verses because iconographically a crescent moon is

shown to adorn the forehead of Lord Shiva. In fact this entire Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Shiva and his various divine forms.

The *Dakshinagni* is the sacred fire usually lit at the end of a ritual to bear witness while charities, donations or alms are given at the end of religious ceremony. Hence, this fire is not only revered as a holy witness to a noble deed but also feared because as a witness to these noble deeds its testimony is absolutely vital to the ultimate reward for the entire fire sacrifice as any good deed stands fast in the court of law if the witnesses to the deed testify that they were indeed done in their presence. So more than the deed it is the witness that has to be kept in good humour. It is associated with the term ‘Aghor’ and ‘Nirdhav’ because, one, it is a feared witness to charities made at the end of fire sacrifices, and second, it is lit in the last stages or concluding stage of a fire sacrifice when the main fire of the sacrificial pit is dying out.]

10-14. [These five verses describe the third form of Brahm called ‘Vamdeo’.]

The form of Brahm as ‘Vamdeo’ has the following grand virtues—he is a bestower of great knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment; he is like fire personified (i.e. he has the astounding potential and vigour as possessed by the fire element; he is as powerful and potent as fire, as purifying and rejuvenating as the fire which is the third element of creation after earth and water).

He is illuminated with the light that is a metaphor for knowledge and wisdom. This makes him as brilliant and splendorous as millions of suns (signifying the magnificent as well as the stupendous power of knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment that he possesses) [10].

He is a personification of the virtues of Anand (extreme sense of bliss, happiness and joys, of ecstasy and exhilaration, of beatitude and felicity). The Sam Veda with all its melodious connotations and singing patterns is the revealed form of spiritual bliss and ecstasy. [The Sam Veda is usually sung melodiously, set to beautiful music with all its captivating charm, as opposed to other Vedas which are chanted or recited in unison or even read quietly in seclusion, and therefore it fits in well with the observation that this form of Brahm is a personification of Anand—for music is indeed exhilarating and uplifting for the soul. Music provides spiritual peace and tranquility to the tormented soul. Only a man who is internally at peace with himself can sing like a lark; for others it is difficult to hum a tune as it is rare for a burdened heart to be able to sing cheerfully though a song can act as an antidote to depression and dejection of spirits. Music has a profound soothing and rejuvenating effect on the mind and nerves, and is often used for therapeutic usage.]

Since singing obliges one to have a soothing and melodious voice, a voice which is sweet and pleasant, is mellowed and mellifluous, and which can endure sustained notes and fine tunes while singing, this form of Brahm is a personification of these eclectic and grand virtues. [The word used in the verse is ‘Dheer Swar’ which refers to the longer sounds or *Swars* of the Sanskrit vowels as opposed to the short sounds as mentioned in verse no. 7 previously. These long vowel sounds are the following—‘Ee’ as in *feel* or *keel*; ‘Oo’ as in *boot* or *soot*; ‘Aye’ as in *my* or *dye*; ‘Aou’ or ‘Ow’ as in *now* or *cow*. The word *Dheer* means steady, courageous, resilient, persistent, tenacious and sustainable. So the basic sounds of music that are represented by its various notes and tones and which can be sustained over a period of time are called ‘Dheer Swar’ in the context of the Sam Veda chanting because this particular Veda is based on music forms for its rendition. A

melodious, pleasant, welcoming and sweet voice is the best gift that a man possesses; it endears him to everyone and at all places and time. Further, singing of the Sam Veda requires special skills, and all these qualities would distinguish a man from the rest. In other words, Brahm is not an ordinary God, but it is the sweetest, the most skilled, and the wisest entity in creation. The long vowel sounds indicate the ability of Brahm to sustain this creation over long periods of time along with the fact that, like the long-drawn breath and notes of music, the creation can be stretched and elongated as far as Brahm wishes it to expand. Song also implies that Brahm has infused an element of sweetness and pleasantness in a world that is otherwise a bitter and miserable place to live.]

He is revealed in the form of the Ahavaniya holy fire, the best of the fires. [This fire is lit at the beginning to invoke the Gods and welcome them, hence it is like the Herald of good and auspicious intentions in creation.] [11].

Since Gyan is a personified form of this Brahm, it is very potent and powerful in slaying one's enemies (represented by ignorance and delusions). It is empowered with great authority, strength and potentials in this respect.

This Brahm is 'Avyaya', i.e. it is imperishable, undiminished and infinite; it cannot be delineated and done away with. At the same time, it is a personification of unmatched dynamic powers of creation known as 'Shakti', i.e. it is a fount of divine cosmic energy having stupendous strength, great powers and astounding potentials.

His complexion is Shukla (white) in colour. [This word is indicative of, one, semen which is a metaphor for vitality, potency and stamina, symbolising its ability to create and propagate the creation, and second, the Sata Guna which is the best, the most auspicious and noblest virtue in creation. This word 'Shukla' also refers to the Shukla Yajur Veda. Compare this stanza with verse no. 7 above.]

In spite of the fact that he is such an exalted entity, he has the low quality called Tama in him. [This is because if we are expected to take it for granted that everything in existence is Brahm personified, then it obviously includes the darker side of creation along with the brighter side. The darker side is symbolised by the word 'Tama'—meaning dark, while the brighter side is symbolised by the word 'Shukla'—meaning white. In other words, Vamdeo Brahm possesses the unique and often paradoxical qualities that defy understanding. It is not without reason that Brahm has not been able to be defined even by the Vedas, and they threw up the towel to surrender, saying 'Neti Neti'—not this not this, or neither this nor that. In other words, the Vedas tried their best to and attempted every means to describe what Brahm is, but failed miserably in their attempt. When they almost declared a certain form of Brahm as the authentic form and the final description of Brahm, they were confronted with another form which was equally truthful form of Brahm, and this was an infinite cycle. So they concluded that it is impossible to have any specific definition of Brahm, that it was impossible to assign any definite attribute to Brahm and fix it as the latter's characteristic quality. They discovered that Brahm encompasses every conceivable description and would fit into every imaginable epithet. So while it is true that Brahm is revealed in the form of the knowledge contained in the Krishna Yajur Veda for example, then it is equally true that Brahm is also revealed in the form of the Shukla Yajur Veda. Similarly, Brahm is both Aghor as well as Vamdeo. Brahm is represented in equal measure by the Tama Guna

symbolised by the dark colour as much as the Sata Guna represented by the white colour.]

He (Vamdeo Brahm) is completely enlightened, wise and realised. No knowledge escapes him. He is a personification of these auspicious virtues [12].

He (Vamdeo Brahm) is not only the regulator and controller of the three worlds, but also has revealed himself in the form of these three worlds. [The three worlds are the ones revealed in the form of the three words uttered by the creator at the time of creation—viz. ‘Bhu’ referring to the terrestrial world, ‘Bhuvaha’ to the world above the earth, i.e. the sky, and ‘Swaha’ meaning the heavens where the Gods live. These three worlds also symbolically refer to the three states in which the consciousness exists—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or the dreaming state, and Sushupta or the deep sleep state which correspond to the Vishwa, Taijas and Pragya forms of existence.]

He is a bestower of all good fortunes and auspiciousness to all the creatures in creation. He gives the rewards to all according to the deeds done by them [13].

He is honoured by the eight ‘Akchars’. [That is, he is praised by a Mantra having eight letters or syllables. This Mantra is ‘OM Namoha Mahadevaye’.] It also means that he has revealed himself as the eight elements¹ of creation that are ‘imperishable, eternal and infinite’ by nature—i.e. they are ‘Akchar’.

This supreme Divinity lives in the heart that is symbolically like a divine lotus with eight petals. [This vision of the heart as a lotus of eight petals is expounded in the Upanishads dealing with Yoga and Tantra.] [14]. (10-14).

[Note--¹According to the definition of Prakriti as described in the standard Sanskrit-English Dictionary of Sir Monier Monier-Williams, M.A., K.C.I.E., the *eight* fundamental Elements or Tattwas are the following—one Avyakta (that supreme entity that is un-manifest and untangible but nevertheless at the basis of everything that exist) + one Buddhi (intellect) + one Ahankar (the inherent nature of having ego and pride) + and five Tanmatras or the subtle bodies consisting of the five sense perceptions, such as the faculties of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting. These are also called the Prakriti or nature of an individual creature at the micro level as well as of the creation at the macro level.

According to the philosophy of Vedanta, these *eight* fundamental Elements or Tattwas in creation are the following—earth, water, fire, wind and sky constituting the gross body of the creature, and the two other subtle elements consisting of the Mana (mind and intellect) and ‘Ahankar’ (ego, pride) which constitute the subtle body of the creature.

See also note to verse no. 1.]

15-18. [These five verses describe the fourth form of Brahm called ‘Tat-purush’.]

The form of Brahm that has been described as ‘Tat-purush’—literally ‘that Purush’—is manifested in the form of the air element; the latter is the symbolic body of Brahm. [The ‘Purush’ here refers to the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm. Refer verse no. 17 in this context. He is all-pervading and all-encompassing, all-powerful and omnipresent like the air or wind element. At the same time, this Purush is invisible and imperceptible but nonetheless all-important like the air element without which life is impossible to imagine. The air is the second subtlest element in existence after the sky element, and therefore occupies the second place away from Brahm—just like the Viraat Purush who represents the macrocosmic gross body of

Brahm and who is two steps away from Brahm, the first place being occupied by Hiranyagarbha which is the subtle body of Brahm.]

This form of Brahm (i.e. as the air), in association with the five forms¹ of the subtle fire element, controls the effectiveness of the various Mantras and infuses these Mantras with their stupendous mystical and dynamic powers. [The Mantras are basically letters or words that are injected with astounding powers that represent cosmic dynamic forces of Nature in coded form, which when decoded and harnessed can produce magnificent and magical results—both in terms of obtaining spiritual benefit as well as to gain temporal rewards. The Mantras need the force of the vital winds present inside the body, called the Pran, in order to be empowered and activated. They are said to embody the five fire elements because they are ‘very hot, powerful, potent, unrelenting, unforgiving and effective like the fire element’ when employed for any purpose. The Mantras have to be ‘said’—uttered, chanted, recited or spoken aloud—to make them effective in a religious ceremony, such as the fire sacrifice. Speaking and hearing needs air, either as the breath which creates sound in the throat and empowers the man to chant the Mantras, or as the medium through which sound travels in space. Therefore, the Mantras are said to be wearing the air element, or that the air element forms the body that carries the Mantra much like the gross body of the creature which carries its soul or Atma.] [15].

This form of Brahm is revealed in the form of all the fifty letters of the Sanskrit language—inclusive of the vowels and consonants. The Atharva Veda is also its manifestations. [Every form of Veda needs words to be expressed and preached, and therefore the need for letters. Since the Vedas are repositories of all knowledge, they are embodiments of Brahm, who is the eclectic virtues of wisdom, erudition, sagacity, knowledge, enlightenment, expertise and skill personified. The Atharva Veda is the fourth Veda.]

He is the Lord of all living beings, and the entire world is his body [16].

His countenance/complexion is red like blood. [‘Blood’ is a symbol of life and its vibrant energy. The colour ‘red’ is regarded as the auspicious colour in Hinduism, and along with yellow and green form the metaphoric colour for auspiciousness, vitality, virility, vibrancy and potency. That is why it is used as a dot worn on the forehead by married women as well as Brahmins and other noble classes in Hinduism. It is a sign of their higher status—not caste-wise but in practical terms to indicate that they are religious people and believers who follow the tenets of good living as laid down in the scriptural canons.]

He is the fulfiller of all wishes and aspirations; he is the eliminator of all torments and miseries. He is the only cause that is behind the coming into existence of this creation, is responsible for its sustenance and protection, and is the one cause of its final dissolution.

He is the bearer of all Shaktis, all the dynamic forces of Nature, visible or invisible [17].

He is established in and symbolises the fourth state of existence of consciousness, called the Turiya state, which goes beyond the other three states (called Jagrat—the waking state, Swapna—the dreaming state, and Sushupta—the deep sleep state of existence). That is why he is honoured and lauded by the grand and majestic epithet of ‘Brahm’.

He is the one who creates everything in existence so much so that he is the one who is served and praised by such exalted Gods as Brahma the creator, and Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation [18] (15-18).

[Note—¹The five forms of the divine fires are the following-- The *five holy fires* have been elaborately described in *Chandogya Upanishad*, canto 4, section 10 to 13. There are five formal divine fires—(a) ‘Garhyapatya’—the fire of the household hearth; the main fire of the formal fire sacrifice; the fire that every householder is supposed to keep alive and worship regularly and from which the first spark is taken for the rituals associated with religious ceremonies, (b) ‘Dakshinagni’—the fire used as a witness to making charities or any other religious festivity; the fire lit at the site of a sacrificial fire ritual, near its south end, (c) ‘Ahawaniya’—the fire lit to invoke the Gods during a ritualistic sacrifice, (d) ‘Sabhya’—the fire of the Vedic period which was continuously lit, and (e) ‘Awasathya’—the fire of the later Smriti period.]

19-23. [These five verses describe the fifth form of Brahm called ‘Ishan’.]

The fifth form of the supreme transcendental Brahm known as Ishan should be regarded as the one who inspires the greatest of wisdom and enlightenment in the creature. He is the Lord who is personified as ‘Buddhi’—the higher level of the mind, the ‘intellect and intelligent thinking’ (that distinguishes an ordinary man from an enlightened, wise and erudite one who is analytical and balanced in his approach to the problems of life, and who would rather ponder and peep deep into things to unravel the secret truth hidden behind their external façade which might be very misleading if the mind is not applied to external appearances).

He is merely a witness to what is happening around him. [That is, the supreme Brahm is dispassionate towards everything. He would not take sides with anyone, and would judge the creature and determine his destiny in a cool fashion according to the latter’s deeds and actions. In his manifestation as the intellect of the creature, he remains neutral and disassociated with the deeds and actions of the body and what happens in the surrounding world so that the information collected by the mind can be dispassionately analysed by it and a well-considered judgment be given. The intellect is supposed to be unbiased and uninvolved like a judge in a court of law to ensure that the decisions and deductions that a man makes are up to the mark, free from any bias and pre-conceived ideas.]

He is manifested in the form of the sky element; is as invisible and without any specific attributes as the sky. [The sky is the subtlest of the five elements that came into existence, and is the nearest analogue to Brahm. Brahm has all the qualities typical of the sky—viz. the sky is vast, fathomless, infinite, colourless, taintless, all-pervading, all-enclosing, omnipresent, attributeless, indefinable, and beyond reach. Everything that exists is within the boundary of the sky, for there is nothing beyond the space of the sky. All these qualities are applicable to Brahm.]

He is revealed in the form of the cosmic all-pervading ethereal background sound called Omkar or Pranav that permeates throughout the space of the sky; the sky is pregnant with it. This Omkar was the seed from which all forms of Swars (sounds and languages, the power to speak and the faculty of the mind that governs speech) were born. That is, Brahm is revealed in the form of the sound element that originates in the space of the sky and then spreads out in it to completely fill it and gradually fade away

into the vast bowls of the sky, leaving no trace behind whatsoever¹. [The implication is this—If everything that exists is within the periphery of the sky representing Brahm, then it must have a point source of origin just like the sound which originates from one given source, spreads out to cover the entire space available to it, dissipates its energy and then fades into oblivion or disappears into the same space of the sky from which it originated, without leaving a trace. No one can hear that sound any more. Likewise, the world originates from this Brahm, evolves and develops into its present and future forms that covers the entire space of the sky, and then collapses and merges into this singular Brahm represented by the open space of the sky when it (the world; the creation) has run its full course and dissipated all its energy. It is like a line drawn on a piece of paper. It starts with a dot or point, is stretched to whatever length one wishes it to elongate, and then re-traces itself back to its root or point of origin to the ‘dot’ where the tip of the pencil or pen had first touched the paper.] [19].

He embodies all the divine forces of creation called Gods—or conversely, all the Gods are his manifestations. He is calm and quiet, tranquil and serene—in fact, he not only epitomizes these virtues but transcends them. [This is because he is present in the period when the creation has ended and before the new wave of creation starts. This is the period of silence and peace that cannot be achieved once the process of creation starts. Life is characterised by hustle and bustle, by sound, activity and movements. So the only time when complete peace and non-activity is obtained is the intervening period between the end of this creation and the beginning of the new creation when there is no activity whatsoever. The three basic sounds of OM, i.e. ‘A’, ‘U’ and ‘M’ stand for the three primary stages of creation—emergence, development and conclusion respectively. When the Mantra OM is pronounced, the mouth closes, and it remains closed till one pronounces again. This therefore would indicate the period of complete rest and peace. This is why emphasis is laid on silent repetition of this Mantra, i.e. repeating it without loudly pronouncing the letters, because that ensures a permanent closure of the mouth which in turn would mean a perpetual state of rest and peace. This is metaphoric way of saying that after realising the truth of creation a wise person becomes silent and remains quiet. This is another way of saying that upon self-realisation or Brahm-realisation, an enlightened man becomes rested and peaceful. He no longer thirsts for knowledge and peace as he has accessed both.]

He is manifested in the form of the first signs of life represented by the first alphabet of the Sanskrit language, i.e. the letter ‘A’ as in the words ‘son or done’. [There is another connotation of this—the letter A is the first syllable of the word OM representing the ethereal cosmic sound called Pranav. To pronounce this letter, one has to open one’s mouth, which is a metaphoric way of saying that the creation of the world has just took off.]

Similarly, he is manifested as the sky which forms his body, and therefore is as vast and colossus, as measureless and fathomless, as eternal, infinite and imperishable, as taintless and attributeless, as all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent, and as majestic and grand as the sky. Nothing exists that is beyond Brahm in the form of the endless and infinite sky element. Besides this, he is as subtle and indefinable as the sky element. He survives this creation and precedes it like the sky which remains in place even after this world comes to an end, and it is from this sky that it re-emerges in the next phase of creation [20].

He is the controller of this creation having five aspects, facades or facets. In fact, all these five are symbolic faces of the same cosmic all-pervading Brahm who is supreme and transcendental². In other words, the entire creation is a manifestation of this all-incorporating and all-encompassing Brahm [21].

This supreme 'Panch Brahm' concludes his own creation revealed in his own likeness and which is his own body, both at the macrocosmic level of creation as well as at the microcosmic level, by withdrawing it into his own self (like the octopus withdrawing its arms or a snail drawing in its tentacles). He concludes the expansion of his own Maya (which is the delusion-creating power of Brahm and revealed as Prakriti or Nature) and remains perpetually established in his eternal self [22].

The primary form of Brahm, i.e. Ishan, is supreme. It transcends all the other manifestations in which he has revealed himself, first as the five-faced or five-faceted Panch Brahm, and then expanded his own self to form the five-folded or five-faceted creation resembling a three-dimensional pentagon².

He shines with his own light (like the sun); he requires no extraneous source of light to shine. The radiance and splendour that emanates from him is self generated and effervescent. It comes out uniformly from all parts of his divine body in equal intensity—whether it is the periphery or the center. That is why he is called the self-illuminated and self-created Supreme Being [23]. (19-23).

[Note--¹The first evidence of life was represented by the sound that was produced due to vibrations created in the cosmic ether present in the primordial space. The energy generated by these vibrations was the first spark that set off a chain reaction. Since sound needs a medium to travel, this space was deemed to be filled by the cosmic fluid, the ether, that metamorphosed into the primordial jelly as time progressed, which in turn transformed into the cosmic embryo, the Hiranyagarbha, lodged in the cosmic womb represented by the vast bowls of the sky. That is why the infant born from it was called Viraat—one that is vast and colossus like its parent. Silence is the opposite of life that is vibrant and boisterous; silence is eerie and tantamount to death—that is why we have the phrase 'the silence of death'. So therefore, Omkar or Pranav marks the presence of a vibrant and robust life full of vibe and energy—which are metaphors for the creative and energetic aspects of Brahm.

²The creation has been visualised as a pentagon, with the overall structure resembling a shrine—with the two vertical lines of the pentagon as its walls, the base as the floor, and the two slanting lines meeting at the top as the sloping roof of the shrine. The apex point of the pentagon is like the top of the shrine, the pinnacle of the structure where usually a flag or cupola is placed. This point is represented by Ishan Brahm, the form of Brahm that acts as the flag or insignia atop this shrine, thereby symbolically establishing its supremacy and authority over the entire structure known as creation.

From the philosophical point of view of Vedanta and metaphysics, the five faces of Brahm represent the five aspects, facades or facets of creation and are symbolisms of the entire gamut that is known as this creation, with all its glories and warts. We shall now have a bird's eye-view of what these 'five symbolic aspects of Brahm' stand for.

(1) Panch Maha Yagya (the five great sacrifices)—The entire life of a religious and pious spiritual aspirant is regarded as one big wholesome fire sacrifice, and thus it is ordained that he must diligently perform the five *Panch Maha Yagyas* as the components that would complete this holistic sacrifice in its entirety. They consist of five great noble deeds that a householder is ordained and expected to do that have the same sanctity and holiness as doing a formal fire sacrifice. They are the following—(a) Brahma Yagya—

study and teaching of the Vedas and other scriptures that enlighten the man about the ultimate Truth known as Brahm, (b) Deva Yagya—the performance of fire sacrifices in which offerings are given to the sacred fire which are meant for the divine Gods and are done to honour them, (c) Pitri Yagya—paying homage to the spirit of dead ancestors, offering oblations to them and doing religious activities for the peace of their souls, (d) Service to mankind called ‘Jiva Yagya’, and (e) Bhut Yagya—service to all the creatures including animals, insects, plants etc., such as giving them food, shelter and protection, i.e. taking general care of them. These five sacrifices have been described in *Ashramopanishad*, verse no. 3.

(2) The five sacraments—They are the five deemed sacred sacrifices as follows--(a) doing *Japa* which is repeating/chanting/reciting of the divine Mantra called the Gayatri Mantra which is especially prescribed for renunciate ascetics (see verse no. 14 below), (b) doing *Yoga* or meditation and contemplation upon divinity, (c) doing *Tapa* or observing austerities, doing penances, suffering hardships for spiritual enhancement, having noble thoughts and following virtuous path inspite of all the hurdles and inconveniences, (d) doing *Swadhyaya* or self study which entails the deep study of the scriptures and contemplating upon their teachings as well as meditating upon the Atma which is pure consciousness and the pure self, and (e) endeavouring to acquire *Gyan* which is the truthful knowledge about the ultimate Truth and Reality in the creation, a knowledge that would help to dispel the dark veil of ignorance and delusions that surrounds the creature from all the sides, almost suffocating and pinning him down.

(3) According to another version, these Panch Brahms are the five manifestation of the Supreme Being, and they are Sun God, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, Shiva the concluder and annihilator, Ganesh the most revered deity in the Hindu pantheon who is invoked at the beginning of any auspicious effort, and Shakti or the divine Goddess personifying the stupendous energy in Nature.

(4) Again, since everything in existence has been created from the five basic elements, it follows that Panch Brahm also refers to the *five sheaths or Koshas* that surround the pure conscious Atma which is the truthful identity of the creature. These five Koshas are the following--‘Annamaye Kosh’ or the food sheath, ‘Pranmaye Kosh’ or the vital wind sheath, ‘Manomaye Kosh’ or the mental sheath, ‘Vigyanmaye Kosh’ or the intellect sheath, and ‘Anandmaye Kosh’ or the bliss sheath. These sheaths cover the Atma or pure conscious self like various coverings or shrouds wrapping any object. They are also called the five Kalaas of Man.

The *Annamaye Kosh* is that which was created by the intake of food, was nourished and developed by food, and at the end it finally disintegrates into the basic ingredients that constitutes food and merges with the earth element from where the food has derived its original ingredients. This forms the gross body of the creature.

The *Pranmaye Kosh* consists of the five vital winds (Pran, Apaana, Vyan, Udaana, and Samaan) along with the five organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, excretory and reproductive).

The *Manomaye Kosh* consists of the mind and the five organs of perceptions (ears, eyes, nose, tongue and skin), while the *Vigyanmaye Kosh* consists of the combined apparatus made of the intellect and these five organs of perception.

A combination of these three sheaths, i.e. Pranmaye Kosh (vital wind sheath), Manomaye Kosh (the mental sheath) and Vigyanmaye Kosh (the intellect sheath) is what is known as the ‘Ling Deha’ of a creature, or the ethereal form of the corporeal body. This is the subtle body of the creature.

The sheath in which the pure conscious self is not aware of the ‘Ling Deha’ is called *Anandmaye Kosh*. This forms the causal body of the creature”.

These five sheaths are called the ‘Panch Kosha’.

(5) Life in this creation is sustained by the wind or air element, as is evident from the fact that it is possible to survive for a reasonable time without water and food but one immediately suffocates to death if there is no air. These vital winds or air element takes five principal forms, called the *Panch Prans* which are personifications of the magnificent abilities of the supreme Brahm to sustain life in a quiet and subtle manner. These primary and principal vital wind called *Pran* lives in a subtle form in the subtle space of the heart (and keeps this organ functioning); the vital wind called *Apaan* lives in the region of the anus (and is responsible for excretion of the residue from the intestines); the *Samaan* wind is found in the navel region (because it is from here that all the nerves and veins in the body radiate out from the nerve center or core called the 'Nabhi Kand', and ensure that nutrients and other essential supplies are equally distributed in the body); the *Udaan* wind lives in the region of the throat (because this wind is synonymous with the notion of 'getting up' or 'rising', so it symbolises the creature's state of wakefulness when he speaks out, and at the same time it helps it to 'raise' and spit out cough present in the lungs); and *Vyan* spreads through the body (as it helps in maintaining equilibrium). These vital winds have been described in Amrit Naad Upanishad, verse no. 35-38 of Krishna Yajur Veda. These five manifestations of the wind or air element are also called the five 'Kalaas of Pran'.

(6) *Panch Varga* consists of the following group of subtle elements that constitutes the body of all living beings—viz. (a) the Mana or mind along with its other companions (i.e. the mind, the intellect, the Ahankar or the sense of ego, pride and self righteousness), (b) the Pran or vital winds that sustain life in the body and its various forms (such as *Apaan*, *Vyan*, *Samaan*, *Udaan* etc.), (c) the ability of the creature to have *Ichha* or to have desires, wishes, passions and aspirations, along with their astounding powers and potentials, (d) the three Gunas or qualities that are inherent to all the living beings and which determine the character and behaviour of the individual, such as the quality called *Sata* (which is the best of the three qualities and gives rise to noble aspirations and makes the creature righteous and upright), *Raja* (which is the medium quality creating worldly passions and the tendency to delve into things worldly) and *Tama* (which is the lowest quality creating a sinful tendency and a predominance of inertia and indolence), and (e) the various deeds broadly classified into those that are righteous, noble and auspicious, and those that are the opposite.

The Sarvasaaro-panishad, verse no. 7 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition describes them.

(7) They are the five Gods worshipped by Hindus. They are Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, Shiva the concluder, Aditya the Sun God, and Ganesh the son of Shiva and the God who is worshipped before all other Gods in the Hindu pantheon of Gods.

(8) The five elements called the *Panch Bhuts*—earth, water, fire, air and sky. The Yogtattva Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition verse nos. 85-99 describe the various elements, their location in the body and their patron deities. Refer also Sharrirako-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 1-2. The Mantras pertaining to these elements are mentioned in Kalagni-rudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 3. They are the following--'Agniriti Bhasm' for the fire element, 'Vayuriti Bhasm' for the air or wind element, 'Jalmiti Bhasm' for the water element, 'Sthalmity Bhasm' for the earth element, and 'Vyomriti Bhasm' for the sky element.

(9) The five sense organs of perceptions—ears, nose, eyes, tongue and skin.

(10) The five sense perceptions, called *Tanmatras*—hearing, smelling, seeing, tasting and feeling.

(11) The five organs of action—hands, legs, mouth, anus and genitals.

(12) The five states of existence of the consciousness—Jagrat or waking, Swapna or dreaming, Sushupta or deep sleeping, Turiya or post deep sleep, and Turiyateet or the transcendental state beyond Turiya which corresponds to ultimate enlightened state of perpetual Samadhi.

(13) The five auspicious times, called Panchaanga, when fire sacrifices could be held. The word literally means 'the five limbs' and these five limbs are the following—Vaara or the day of the week—the solar day, Tithi or the lunar day, Nakshatra or the lunar mansion, Karana or half of Tithi, and Yoga or the time when all auspicious signs are in conjunction, or when the sun and the moon together accomplish 13 degrees and 20 minutes of space.

(14) The Panch Bhedas or the doctrine of five-fold differences which pertain to the branch of Vedanta philosophy called the 'Dvaitya Vedanta' whose strongest exponent was Madhavacharya (1238-1317 A.D.). According to this theory, Brahm is different from the Jiva, the living being, as well as the Prakriti or Nature. All the Jivas are different from one another and from the Prakriti. All the objects that evolve out of Prakriti (Nature) are also different from one another. It therefore recognises five aspects of creation—(i) Brahm or the Supreme Being who is also known as Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation as well as its concluder and creator, (ii) Maya which is the indescribable and inconceivable cosmic power that Brahm employs to create delusions and which has revealed as Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu, who presides over all worldly assets, (iii) Prakriti or Nature in its all-encompassing connotations, (iv) Jiva or the individual soul or the individual creature, and (v) the inanimate world of non-living things.

(15) The five types or kinds of living beings (people)—These term has many variations. In the Rig Veda, 10/53/4, the five types of creatures that the Hota priest appeals to accept his offerings—The Devtas (Gods), Manushya (human beings), Pitras (spirits of dead ancestors), Pashus (animals) and Pakshis (birds).

According to another interpretation, they are the four Varnas or classes in the society and the sub-class, viz. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras and Nishads (boatman and hunters).

(16) The Mantra of five syllables—(a) The five syllable Mantra dedicated to the Lord Shiva in his form as 'Panch Brahm' is the following—'OM Namaha Shivaye'. [Na + Maha + Shi + Vaa + Ye = 5; the word OM is used as a salutation only.] (b) The five syllable Mantra dedicated to Vishnu is the following—'OM Vishnave Namaha'. [Vi + Shna + Ve + Na + Maha = 5; the word OM is used as a salutation.]

(17) The five cardinal rules of political conduct—Mitrabheda or breaking of friendship, Mitralaabh or making of friendship, Kaakolukiye or to the attempt to forge friendship between two natural enemies, Labdha-prashmanam or to lose something that was acquired with difficulty, and Aparikshikt-karitam or the results of inconsiderate and reckless action.

(18) The five modes of offering worship to the deity—offering of Gandha or sandalwood paste or fragrance, offering Pushpa or flowers, offering of Dhupa or incense, offering of Dipa or lighted lamp, and offering of Naivedya or sweet foods.

(19) The five holy fires--(a) 'Garhyapatya'—the fire of the household hearth; the main fire of the formal fire sacrifice; the fire that every householder is supposed to keep alive and worship regularly and from which the first spark is taken for the rituals associated with religious ceremonies), (b) 'Dakshinagni'—the fire used as a witness to making charities or any other religious festivity; the fire lit at the site of a sacrificial fire ritual, near its south end), (c) 'Ahawaniya'—the fire lit to invoke the Gods during a ritualistic sacrifice), (d) 'Sabhya'—the fire of the Vedic period which was continuously lit) and (e) 'Awasathya'—the fire of the later Smriti period).

(20) The five Tormentors--The five 'tormenters' are the following— (a) Avidya (ignorance); (b) Asmita (vanity, ego, pride, arrogance, hypocrisy and haughtiness; according to the philosophy of non-duality, to regard the Atma and the subtle body consisting of mind-intellect complex as one); (c) Raag (attachment, infatuation, desire etc.); (d) Dwesh (ill-will, enmity, malice, hatred, confrontationist attitude etc.) and (e) Abhinivesh (fear of death)—अविद्या, अस्मिता, राग, द्वेष, अभिनिवेश. Refer Adhyatma Ramayan of sage Veda Vyas, Lanka Kanda, canto 10, verse no.61.]

(21) The five Vikaars or faults or shortcomings or imperfections of the body—According to *Mandal Brahmin Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Brahmin 1, section 2, verse nos.1, there are following—viz. (1) Kaam (worldly lust, desires, passions and yearnings), (2) Krodh (anger, indignation, wrathfulness), (3) Asthma or obstruction of breath, (4) Bhaya (fear of physical harm), and (5) Nidra (sleep, lethargy, indolence, drowsiness, sluggishness and lack of alertness especially when doing some important or dangerous work requiring concentration of mind, vigilance and alertness of the faculties) (verse no. 1).

(22) The five phases through which the creation passes—conception, creation, expansion and development, existence and sustenance, and conclusion or end.

(23) Panchak—The combination of Daan (giving of alms, making of charities and donation), Laabh (gain or profit or reward), Bhog (enjoyment and sufferance), Upbhog (consumption) and Virya (semen and potency; virility, stamina, strength and vigour).

(24) Panch Kaval—The five mouthfuls of food that are set aside before one begins to eat, and are meant for the dog, some lowly person, a leprosy patient, a sick man, and a crow. This has a symbolic importance—it teaches the man to take care of the downtrodden and the underdogs of society as much as he takes care of himself because the same Brahm that resides in the body of the person who has sat down to eat a gourmet meal also resides in the lowest of the lowly in this creation.

(25) Panch Ganga—The five holy rivers of India, viz. Ganges, Yamuna, Saraswati, Kirnaa, and Dhutpaapaa.

(26) Panch Nad—The five rivers that flow into the Arabian ocean—viz. Satlaj, Vyas, Ravi, Chenav and Jhelam.

(27) Panch Gabya—The five things regarded as sanctified and used during fire sacrifices and other religious ceremonies—milk, curd, clarified butter called Ghee, cow's dung and cow urine.

(28) Panchaamrit—A concoction made of five things considered as holy and auspicious as nectar, and hence the name 'Panch Amrit' which is prepared by mixing the following five—milk, curd, clarified butter, sugar/treacle and honey.

(29) Panch Kanya—The five women mentioned in the Purans who are regarded as eternally chaste, and therefore called 'Kanya', literally 'a virgin girl'—Ahilya, Draupadi, Kunti, Tara and Mandodari.

(30) Panch Gaur—The five sub-castes amongst the Brahmins who inhabited the area north of the Vindhya Mountains—Saaraswat, Kaanyakunj, Gaur, Maithil and Utkal.

(31) Panch Dravid—The five sub-castes of Brahmins who lived south of the Vindhya Mountains—Maharashtra, Tailang, Karnaata, Gurjur and Dravid.

(32) Panch Jan—The following five categories of creatures—Gandharva (a semi-god), Pittar (spirit of dead ancestor), Deva (higher Gods; the creatures with auspicious nature), Asur (non-Gods; the demons; creatures with inauspicious nature) and Rakshas (flesh eating demons; the ogres and cannibals; those who are cruel and merciless).

(33) Panch Tikta—The five bitter herbs used for their medicinal properties—viz. (i) Kantakir (a prickly plant; the silk cotton tree; *solanum jacquint*), (ii) Saunth (dried ginger), (iii) Kuta in all its three forms (e.g. one called Kutaj—meaning the medicinal plant with the name *echites unitedysenterica*; the second called White Kutaki—meaning

the plant called Helle Bore or *picrorrhiza kurrrooa*; and the third called Black Kutaki—meaning the plant black Helle Bore or *hellborus niger*, (iv) Chiraayataa (wormwood plant; gentiana cheratta), and (v) Giloya or Guruch (a medicinal creeper that grows around the Neem tree—the *margosa* tree).

(34) Panch Naath—The five holy pilgrim sites where five forms of Lord Vishnu are established—Badrinath in the northern Himalayan mountain range, Dwarkanath on the west coast, Jagganath on the eastern coast, Rangnath in the south of India, and Srinath in the western part of India (in the state of Rajasthan).

(35) Panch Pallav—The leave of the following trees which are regarded as sanctified and used in religious ceremonies—‘Aam’ or mango, ‘Jamun’ or the rose apple tree which is a kind of black plum, the two types of the wood apple tree—viz. ‘Bel’ or *aegle marmelos* and ‘Kaith’ or *feronia elephantum*, and ‘Bijaura Nimbu’ or lime, especially the variety called *citrus medica typica*.

(36) Panch Paatak—The five great sins are the following—killing a Brahmin, getting intoxicated by drinking wine, theft, sex with a teacher’s wife, and company of such people.

(37) Panch Maha Vrat—These are the five great vows, e.g. non-violence and no-killing; truth and non-pretension; not stealing or even eyeing other’s property; celibacy, abstinence and self control in all matters; and non-acceptance as well as non-expectation.

(38) Panch Ratna—The five gems such as gold, diamond, blue sapphire, ruby and pearl.

(39) Panch Shabda—The five types of sounds—that made while chanting or reciting the hymns of the Vedas, that made by heralds, that made at the time of cheering victory or applauding any success, that made by blowing the conch shell, and that made by the musical instrument called Nisan, i.e. the kettle drum.

Thus we see that the term Panch Brahm would include a wide swathe of various hues of existential life in this world. The fact that these five forms of Brahm known as ‘Panch Brahm’ are nothing but one single Brahm revealed in these forms to carry out the complexities of the varied tasks associated with the governing of creation is clearly laid out in verse no. 26-27 below.]

24. Remaining stunned and under the magical spell cast by the Great God Shambhu’s (Shiva’s) Maya (delusion creating powers), even the exalted Gods and other learned creatures are unable to have any idea who that Great God is. They are unable to know anything about him or get acquainted with the reality of this Great God who is the universal Guru (moral preceptor, wise and learned teacher and expert spiritual guide) for the entire living world.

These Gods are not able to fathom or know any truth about this Great Lord who is the cause of all that exists, including these Gods themselves, and is the Supreme Being of creation.

The truthful cosmic and divine form of that supreme Lord called the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading but most subtle and sublime form of the Supreme Being known as Brahm, who is the Lord of everything in existence, cannot be seen or perceived in the ordinary way inspite of the fact that he is self-illuminated and omnipresent everywhere. [That is, though something that gives out its own light, for example an electric bulb, can be seen from a distance even in dark, this Viraat Purush is not visible to the naked eye because he has no physical attributes and characteristic features.]

But no, it would be wrong to say that the supreme Lord is not visible, for wise ones see him in his universal and omnipresent form as revealed in the shape of this visible creation! (24).

25. That Brahm who illuminates or lights up this creation, i.e. the Brahm from whom this creation has emerged and who has ensured that it becomes clearly visible to even an ordinary creature not an expert of metaphysics or spiritualism, and in whom this creation would finally collapse and dissolve at the time of its conclusion, is most tranquil, serene and peaceful. That Brahm is indeed an embodiment of tranquility, peace, serenity and calmness. That Brahm is the ultimate citadel of creation, the highest point of all spiritual endeavours, and the so-called final frontier! (25).

26. That which is known by the five names such as Saddyojat etc. as narrated previously in this Upanishad is nothing else but this same Brahm who is also known as 'Panch Brahm' because of this fact that it is five-faceted or has five aspects to its holy and exalted existence. In other words, it is the same indivisible, immutable, uniform, universal and non-dual Supreme Being who has manifested in five forms (as enumerated in this Upanishad) in order to perform distinct functions of creation and carry on with the process of initiation, sustenance, propagation and conclusion of creation in an orderly manner. But essentially all these five forms of Brahm are one—they are the five ways by which the same entity is viewed or understood. The same Divinity is understood to have five forms according to the needs of the situation, and therefore there is no trace of distinction or dichotomy between them. Any argument against this universal and irrefutable truth about Brahm is untenable and a revelation of the pervert tendency of the mind.

So therefore, whatever is seen and heard in this vast creation is an expansion of this one Brahm in five forms. In other words, everything seen and heard comes within the ambit of the term 'Panch Brahm' which represents one single Divinity known as Brahm, the Supreme Being. This Panch Brahm is the transcendental Supreme Being known as Brahm himself (26).

27. Established in five symbolic forms known by five different names (such as Saddyojat etc. as listed in verse no. 1 above), it is the same Brahm who has assumed these (and their other derivative and auxiliary) forms (as listed in verse nos. 5-23) in order to carry out the complex task of governing this colossus, unimaginably varied and multifaceted creation in an orderly and smooth fashion. [It is like the case of the same person assuming different roles in a drama, and then playing his each role to perfection every time.]

When one understands the secret of this philosophy it is only then that he is able to know not only the present creation as a manifestation of Brahm but also the truth behind the five forms of Brahm called Panch Brahm¹.

That is, such a wise person is able to see and know about 'Ishan', he is able to have access to 'Ishan', the insignia or the emblem that marks the place where the Emperor of creation, the Supreme Being is present. In other words, a wise and enlightened man is able to know the truth about the supreme transcendental Brahm in all his manifestations if he understands the esoteric meaning of the enigmatic term 'Panch Brahm' (27).

[Note—¹As has been laid out in note to verse nos. 19-23 and in the 2nd part of the introduction to this Upanishad, this world is visualised as a metaphoric pentagon, and everything that exists and all tasks that are done in this world fall within its boundary. The pentagon has five corners, symbolising the five turrets of this castle, or the five towers built at five outer fringes of a city which are like five check points where five chieftains or commanders reside to control the area within. These five corners are also comparable to the five cardinal points of a temple where five consecrated deities are placed for formal worship. All these five points are equally important and vital, for if one is breached or dishonoured or defiled, the entire aura of holiness around the edifice of the temple falls apart. The same thing is applicable here—all these five forms of Brahm perform some specific duty and have an important place in the cosmic scheme of creation. They are like the five angels overlooking the smooth and proper functioning of things. All have to be kept in equally good humour and equally respected because they wield equal powers that are vested in them by the supreme Authority of creation known as Brahm on whose behalf they function.]

28. Hence, if a wise, erudite and enlightened man is able to decipher the basic secret behind the enigmatic form of Brahm known as 'Panch Brahm', he determines that this vast creation is quintessentially a uniform manifestation of this single universal cosmic Divinity known as Brahm who is non-dual, supreme and transcendental. Therefore he concludes that his own body consisting of the five elements is also like the Panch Brahm, and his 'self' that resides in this physical body as the pure conscious Atma, is Brahm personified. [The gross body of the creature is constituted of the five primary elements—viz. earth, water, fire, air and sky. Since each of these elements are manifestations of the single Brahm, it is natural to deduce that anything made from these elements would also be a revelation of Brahm. Therefore, the gross body is the external form of Brahm. The Upanishads describing the genesis of creation describe how the gross body of the creature is a microcosmic form of the macrocosmic Supreme Being—refer Aiteriyo Upanishad of the Rig Veda tradition. The pure consciousness that resides in this body is the counterpart of the cosmic Consciousness called the supreme Atma, the 'Parmatma', and therefore the former is called the Atma, the microcosmic counterpart of the cosmic Parmatma.]

That is, he is convinced about the truth of the spiritual doctrine taught by the scriptures, which is 'So-a-ham'—i.e. 'that is me', or 'it is I'¹. [In other words, an enlightened and self-realised man understands that his 'true self' known as the Atma is none but this Brahm. His body made up of five elements is but a manifestation of the Panch Brahm, whereas the essential thing in this body, i.e. the consciousness residing inside it, is the Brahm whose manifestations are each of these five elements that constitute his body and mark his physical worldly existence. This realisation is the climax of spiritual enlightenment.]

When he has attained this exalted state of wisdom and understanding, he is able to taste the nectar called Amrit that drips from Brahm—i.e. he is able to enjoy the spiritual bliss and ecstasy, the sense of beatitude and felicity that comes with attaining the highest eclectic state of Brahm-realisation (28).

[Note—¹The concept of 'So-a-Ham' has been elaborately described in (i) Sam Veda = Yogchudani Upanishad, verse no. 83. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 34, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-133.]

29. A person who gets to understand and know the truthful divine and sublime form of Brahm in a holistic manner is able to obtain spiritual liberation and deliverance; he obtains emancipation and salvation. There is no doubt about it (29).

30. Lord Shambhu (Shiva) has a Mantra of five syllables¹, and he is a personification of the transcendental supreme Brahm. This Mantra has the Sanskrit alphabet 'Na' in the beginning and the letter 'Ye' at the end. This Mantra should be repeated to please and worship the supreme transcendental Divinity known as Brahm (30).

[Note--¹The five syllable Mantra of Shiva is 'Namaha Shivaye' = Na + Maha + Shi + Va + Ye = 5. Here it implies that each of these syllables stands for one or the other five aspects of creation that the Panch Brahm represents. The Mantra means 'I bow most reverentially to Lord Shiva'.]

31. Everything in existence should be regarded as a manifestation of Panch Brahm and given due respect. One should have a divine and holistic view of creation, and be wise and enlightened enough to universally and uniformly see this Panch Brahm in each unit of creation without exception (because it is the same entity assuming different roles, different characteristics, different attributes, virtues and colours to meet the varying demands of the situation and the ever-changing dynamism of the continuously evolving creation that never remains the same in any two given points of time) (31).

32. A person who studies this scripture espousing and extolling the divine and holy spiritual virtues of Panch Brahm with full devotion and faith is able to become a living embodiment of Panch Brahm himself. He becomes one like Panch Brahm and attains nearness to this divine Being. [This is because once he is convinced of the truth that whatever exists around him is Brahm personified in that particular form, he would be seeing, hearing and interacting with Brahm each single moment of his life. What more, since he would be convinced that his own 'self' is also Brahm he would no longer see Brahm in the outside world or in some distant heaven or in some far away pilgrim site, but here in his own bosom. He need not go to a temple to worship Brahm, he need not please the external world to honour Brahm, for his own 'self' is Brahm personified! Thus this Upanishad is amongst the great ones espousing the philosophy of 'Advaita Vedanta', the eclectic philosophy of non-duality.] (32).

33. This divine knowledge was most graciously imparted to sage called Gaalav by the Emperor of creation and the most benevolent and munificent Lord Shiva himself. After that, the Lord vanished from sight as he dissolved and merged imperceptibly in the Atma (the universal Soul, the cosmic Consciousness) (33).

34. [Continuing his discourse, sage Pippalaada said—] Oh Shaakalya! This knowledge is so comprehensive and potent that by hearing, learning and understanding it one hears, learns and understands everything worth hearing, learning and understanding. By becoming learned in this knowledge and acquiring this spiritual wisdom, one is able to know everything that is known in this world as well as everything else that is not yet known by anyone. [That is, he acquires transcendental powers that enable him to know

things beyond the realm of the physical world, things pertaining to the world beyond the gross and even the subtle world known to human beings. He obtains the so-called ‘third eye of transcendental wisdom’ whereby he can see things not visible to the physical eye of the gross body.] (34).

35. Oh Gautam (i.e. Shaakalya—because he belonged to the lineage of sage Gautam)! Even as by seeing the rounded lump of kneaded clay one comes to understand and realise the irrefutable fundamental truth and the undeniable reality behind all types of toys, pans and pots etc. made of clay which apparently have no physical external resemblance to their primary source, and appear so distinct and very different from their basic ingredient known as ‘clay’, one can similarly know about everything else in existence once one comes to know the real truth about Panch Brahm and his essential form as one single non-dual supreme Divinity known as Brahm. [Here, Brahm is like the clay, the basic ingredient of all things made out of it. Brahm is the basic entity that is used to weave this fabric known as creation, and it completely soaks it from all sides much like sponge put in water or salt dissolved in water. Another example is ornaments made of gold or silver—notwithstanding the intricate design and external shape these ornaments have acquired, their intrinsic value and basic importance is the quality and quantity of gold and silver that is used to make them. If a silver ornament is gold plated, it would still remain silver and not become gold! This is exactly what is meant here. The myriad world seen in all its vibrant colours and fascinating contours is nothing but one Brahm in all these forms. All exteriors and names are misnomers and misleading; they divert the attention of the mind from the reality of the hidden truth.] (35).

36. Taking another example, one can see a rounded piece of iron and learn about its properties. Once done, he would be able to know about the basic properties of all things made of iron. Similarly, by closely observing the nail-cutter one would know how all sharp-edged weapons are able to cut anything into two. [He also understands that all sharp-edged instruments that can cut anything are the same piece of iron known by different names, be it as a nail-cutter, or an iron-saw that cuts wood, or even a knife that cuts fruits etc, or an axe that chops off the thick trunk of a tree.] (36).

37. Once one comes to know about the properties of the basic ingredient used to make anything, he would be able to know and predict the fundamental properties of all other things made of the same ingredient—though all of them are greatly different from one another. Similarly, the action taken by a person in response to any given cause or circumstance at a particular point of time and place would be predictive of how he would react under the same circumstance or when the same cause arises in the future. In other words, it is not possible to separate the reaction or response from the cause; they are correlated (37).

[Note—For example, if one becomes angry when he is disobeyed, he would invariably become angry whenever he is disobeyed. So, it can be safely deduced that to make a man angry he must be disobeyed. Or there must have been someone who disobeyed a man if he is angry, though the direct cause of his anger is not always known and clearly visible.]

38. If anything is treated in its fundamental form and recognised as such, then this treatment and recognition would stand the test of reality and truthfulness. Calling it by another name would be an erroneous and untruthful statement. [For example, if we call a bangle made of gold as 'golden', it would be a perfect truth. But calling it by any other name and describing it in terms of beauty, market price, design and shape would not be saying the full truth about this golden bangle as it would now create an aura of artificiality about its true nature, its essential quality and its intrinsic value.]

Similarly, all things in this world have one root cause (which is Brahm) and to regard them as being separate or distinct from this one root is a fallacious consideration. [For example, the huge tree with its multicoloured flowers, fruits of various sizes and colours, leaves and branches of all sizes and shapes, and roots spreading out in the ground come from one seed which now not visible, but which decides the genetic name of this tree. A mango tree of all sizes and shapes, no matter where it is located, will always be known as a 'mango tree', and no other tree. Therefore, this creation having its 'seed' in Brahm would be always known as 'Brahm personified', and nothing else.] (38).

39. The perception of differences, separation, dichotomy or distinctions that appear between any given two entities in this world are due to errors of perception, flawed knowledge and mistaken identity. This gives rise to perplexities, confusions and doubts. It is not a holistic, right and auspicious way of looking at things; it's a lop-sided and distorted view. Hence, the cause and essence of this entire world, both the animate as well as the inanimate, is one, and it is pure Consciousness (known as the truthful Brahm). All the rest of the views are false, distorted and erroneous (39).

[Note—A pertinent question arises here—it is alright to accept that all animate world is consciousness personified. But how can inanimate things be so? Well, the answer is simple—we recognise anything as being 'animate' or 'inanimate' only till the time we have life in our own body, till we are conscious and alive and have the properly working mind-intellect that has the wisdom and erudition to see and analyse any given two entities and then distinguish between them as one being animate and the other being inanimate. Dead bodies, ignorant and stupid people or those who are insane cannot see any difference between them and therefore cannot distinguish between them. For a dead man or a man who has not the slightest idea of what he is seeing the snake and the rope are the same thing. So we conclude that the basic entity that makes a person aware of the presence of either an animate or the inanimate thing in this world is not the thing itself but the 'consciousness' that is present inside him. It is the consciousness that makes him aware of the presence of the world itself in the first place.]

40. Oh sage! The divine abode of this supreme Brahm is in the body itself, in the heart which is regarded as lotus-shaped¹. There is a subtle space in this heart, called the Hridaya Akash. The heart is like the doorway leading to Brahm residing in this subtle sky. [The entity that lives in this subtle space is called the pure consciousness or the Atma. The word 'Atma' means something that is the essence and soul of anything, the heart of anything, the core and fundamental nature of anything, the essence of anything. So, since consciousness is the entity that injects life in the body, since without it the body would be as good as a piece of lifeless log of wood, it forms the 'Atma', the central Authority of the body. It is the Atma that is the 'Ishan' as far as the body of the aspirant is concerned.]

Spiritual aspirant desirous of liberation and deliverance for themselves, those who seek emancipation and salvation of their soul, should seek Shiva—as Brahm personified—in this heart. Shiva is ‘Sat-Chit-Anand’ personified². [Sat = truth; Chit = consciousness; Anand = bliss and joys infinite, beatitude and felicity unbound.] (40).

[Note—¹Refer verse no. 14 also. Refer also to the Krishna Yajur Veda’s Dakshin Murti Upanishad, verse no. 25, and Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 93/1-93/15, as well as the Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 8, section 1, verse no. 1 of the Sam Veda which describe the heart as a lotus where the Atma resides.

²The concept of ‘Sat-Chit-Anand’ has been elaborately described in Krishna Yajur Veda’s Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse nos. 26-27, and Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6.]

41. Shiva, as Sat-Chit-Anand personified, always lives in the heart. He is a constant witness of all that is happening. That is why the heart is regarded as the doorway to liberation and deliverance from the traps that have been laid out by this delusory and cunning world of artificiality to ensnare the creature in its tentacles.

Verily, this is the teaching of this Upanishad; this is what this Upanishad says and affirms. Amen! (41).

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Chapter 6

The Revelation of Creation according to

The Upanishads of the Atharva Veda

6. (a) The Nrisingh Purva Tapini Upanishad:--

(Canto 1, verse nos. 1-4, 8)

1. It is said that in the very beginning when this creation did not exist, there was only the causal water everywhere, and nothing else. From this primordial water emerged a divine lotus, and Prajapati Brahma, the creator, sat on its petals. Prajapati Brahma developed a desire to create the world. It is a well established principle in creation that what one sincerely desires or wishes, the inner self begins to speak (and think) in accordance with it, and the creature's actions also correspond to such desires or wishes. [This is because his mind becomes focused on fulfilling his desires and wishes. It becomes polarized and restricted in one direction, concentrating all its divine energy and strength on efforts to ensure that the wishes and desires are fulfilled.]

In this connection, wise Rishis (learned sages and seers) have asserted—‘In ancient time, at the time of initiation of creation, the first to come into existence from the Mana (mind) was Kaam (desire). That is why those who are constantly meditating upon the ‘self’ and observe its behaviour and nature regard this Kaam as the fetter of the Atma (which is the pure consciousness that is their true ‘self’). [This is because by having some kind of Kaam (desire) pertaining to this world of material sense objects, the Atma would be focused on it, thinking of it always, and devoting all its time and energy in the pursuit of this desire. This would act as detraction and is a cause of constant annoyance for the Atma, robbing the latter of its freedom and peace.]

Those who are wise, sagacious and learned believe that Kaam is created or has its origin in the Mana (mind) of the creature, and that it is the Mana which is the cause of creation of the Prakriti (or ‘nature’) as well.

It was the primordial water that became the ‘cause’ of this creation (because it is from this ‘causal’ water that Brahma was born atop a lotus, and it was the latter who initiated the process of creation by developing a desire for it, and then taking necessary steps to realise his desires or achieve success in fulfilling his wishes). It is from this water that the creation was created.

Those who know this esoteric secret are able to get or have access to whatever they wish to have (1).

2. Brahma did Tapa (severe austerity and penance) with the noble intention of initiating the process of creation. As an auspicious effect of this Tapa, he had a divine vision or obtained the mystical Mantra of Lord Nrisingh¹ which would empower him to succeed in the noble endeavour of creation. This Mantra was composed in the Anushtup Chanda style².

Brahma created this visible world with the help of this Mantra (i.e. this Mantra empowered him with the mystical powers to create). That is why this visible world is called a manifestation or revelation of the Anushtup Mantra. All the Bhuts (elements) have been created by, or have their origin in this Mantra. All of them get their vital life, and derive the strength and energy to survive from this Mantra, and at the end of their life span they collapse into this Mantra and merge with it.

Indeed, this Mantra of Lord Nrisingh composed in the Anushtup Chanda is the symbolic creator of this entire creation. [This is because even the creator Brahma had got his initial power to create out of this Anushtup Mantra.]

Anushtup is the Vaani or speech personified. In other words, the spoken word is a manifestation of the Anushtup Chanda. It is the Nrisingh Mantra composed in this particular style of metre of verse that has empowered the faculty of speech to speak and express one's inner thoughts. [Obviously, a hymn composed in any metre, whether it is Anushtup or something else, is revealed when it is said aloud, and this entails the use of voice or the faculty of speech. The dynamic powers of the Mantra is revealed when it is repeated or chanted aloud during ceremonial worship or even during personal meditation when a person repeats the Mantra to derive mystical benefits from it. The spoken words of the Mantra help to spread the divine dynamic energy contained in the syllables of the relevant Mantra into the surroundings, and this energy gets uniformly diffused in the space where the Mantra is said. This not only benefits the speaker but even those who hear it.]

A man gets birth and comes to death with this Vaani (speech). [This is a metaphoric way of saying that a man's speech and words can lead to his rising to an exalted stature and acquiring great fame and respect in society on the one hand, or lead to his ruin and infamy on the other hand. It is the man's words and his utterances that can cause strife, hatred, animosity and ill-will, or spread brotherhood and love around him.]

Hence, this Anushtup Chanda is regarded as the best amongst all the Chandas³ (2).

[Note—¹The *Nrisingh Mantra* that was revealed to Brahma has been described in Canto 2 of this Upanishad.

Nrisingh or *Narsingh* is the half lion and half man incarnation of Lord Vishnu to slay the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting Prahalad, his son, because the latter worshipped Vishnu. Lord Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh to kill the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting his own son Prahalad because the child was a devout follower of Vishnu. After having killed the demon, Nrisingh started roaming in the forests, striking terror in the hearts of all the creatures. It was then that Shiva, the universal Lord who has been honoured with the epithet of 'Mahadev' as he is the greatest and supreme God, had assumed the form of Sharav, the killer, and liberated Vishnu from the body of Nrisingh. [Refer *Sharav Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, verse no. 8.] Thus liberated, Vishnu had thanked him a lot (refer *Sharav Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, verse no. 19) and went to his divine abode called Vaikunth. So this ferocious form of Shiva known as Sharav was also called 'Rudra', the angry and ferocious form of the Lord. One

can imagine the fight that might have raged between Nrisingh and Rudra, and obviously Rudra must have been more ferocious than Nrisingh in order to subdue the latter.

This 'half lion and half man' form of the Lord is a visible image that has a cosmic counterpart as the 'half man and half female' manifestation of the Lord that is known as 'Ardha-Narishwar'. This cosmic form of Brahm as Ardha-Narishwar has two components—the right half is depicted in iconography as being a male representing Shiva, the great God, the other half is female representing his divine Shakti known as Parvati or Uma. This Shakti represents the dynamic energy of Shiva. When this applies to Brahm, the male aspect refers to the Supreme Being himself while the female aspect applies to Maya which is the dynamic power that Brahm employed to initiate this magical creation. This depiction is basically envisioned to drive home the point that Brahm and Shakti are inseparable in the context of the creation of the world. This elementary method of reproduction is known as 'asexual reproduction' and is depicted by many asexual plants and animals even today. For instance, the one-celled amoeba reproduces itself by cleavage. On the other hand, if we were to regard Brahm in its purest form as the cosmic Consciousness, then Brahm would not need the other half of the Maya, and would only be one and universal entity which has no definite and describable form and shape, it has no characteristic features, attributes and qualities. This form of the sublime and most subtle Brahm is known as either the Hiranyagarbha or the Viraat Purush depending upon the level of subtlety and grossness which is assigned to it, the former being more subtle than the latter.

The 'lion' part is a metaphor for the grand qualities of unmatched authority, stupendous strength, physical prowess and complete and unchallenged sway over the entire domain of creation just like a lion has over the forest and its inhabitant wild animals. This term is symbolic of the inherent stupendous might of the supreme Brahm as the unquestioned and powerful Lord of this forest-like world inhabited by myriad varieties of living beings, called the Jivas, just like a dense forest infested by wild animals. Similarly, the 'man' part symbolises the fact that Brahm is the most highly placed Lord much like a human being who represents the highest level in the ladder of evolution.

In other words, even as the lion is the unquestioned lord of the wilds and the man is of all the living beings, the supreme transcendental Brahm is the unquestioned Lord of all that exists with all its variations in this creation, whether in its primary form represented by the wild and primitive animals of the jungle or in its more evolved and developed form represented by the man, with all the other stages of creation included in between these two.

Lord Nrisingh is the fourth incarnation of the Supreme Being who had taken various forms to ward off and overcome evil forces in creation when they become ascendant and overcame the good and the righteous. The Lord did this to maintain order in the creation which is like his offspring.

So when one of his great devotees known as Prahalaad was being extremely tormented by his own father, the demon Hiranyakashipu, the Lord appeared as Nrisingh—or as a half lion and half man form—from the pillar to which the innocent lad was tied by the demon to prove to him the omnipresence and all-pervading form of the Supreme Being. Nrisingh is a personification of the grand virtues of dynamism, power, energy, valour and strength, and hence is worshipped by warriors and rulers in general. The Mantra of this Lord is believed to be very powerful and effective against enemies and opponents.

Iconographically, there are many forms of Nrisingh. Some of them are as follows—as seated (Aasin), as standing (Sthaanak), as boon-giver (Vardaayak), as ferocious and angry (Ugra), as striding (Yaanak), in the company of Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth and

the divine consort of Vishnu (Laxmi-Nrisingh), as seated in Yoga or doing meditation like Shiva (Yoga-Nrisingh), as a resident of a mountain (Girija), etc.

His images depict him in either the two-hand form or in a four-hand form. In the latter case, the two back hands hold a conch and discus like the case of Vishnu. The two front hands are shown as killing the demon Hiranyakashipu by forcing the latter on his lap, tearing his abdomen, and yanking his entrails out by his sharp nails.

An entire Puran called Narsingh Puran is likewise dedicated to this Godhead. This Puran glorifies Nrisingh as an incarnation of Vishnu, and is regarded as being synonymous with Narayan, one of the names of Lord Vishnu who is none but the Supreme Being called Brahm. Since Lord Vishnu himself is a macrocosmic, all-inclusive and invisible form of the supreme transcendental Brahm, therefore Nrisingh is a de-facto visible form of the otherwise invisible Brahm.

The Shukar Rahasya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 27, while describing the process of invoking one of the components 'Asi' ('is') of the Maha Vakya (the great saying of the Vedas) 'Tattwamasi' ('that essence is you') says that the Shakti (dynamic energy) of this individual component 'Asi' is Nrisingh.

The Skanda Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 13 praises Lord Nrisingh as an incarnation of the Trinity Gods consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, nourisher and protector, and Shiva the concluder of creation. His divine and glorious virtues are similar to Brahm. Earlier in this Upanishad it has already been established that these three Gods of the Trinity are Brahm personified, as well as the fact that the creature's Atma or pure 'self' which is Consciousness personified, are also Brahm personified. Hence, by worshipping Nrisingh one is offering prayers to Brahm and honouring the grand virtues of creation exemplified by the latter. He is also offering worship to the 'consciousness' that represents Brahm in the physical body of Lord Nrisingh.

²The *Anushtup Chanda* has four lines and a total of thirty-two syllables or letters. Refer Canto 2, verse nos. 3-4.

³The word *Chanda* has two connotations—one is the style in which the hymns of the scriptures were composed, and the other is something that covers another thing, or acts as an enclosure that encircles all other things, or an awning that gives protection or shade, or something that wraps or envelops everything else. Since the creation is divided into four basic divisions or constituent parts, each step of the Anushtup Chanda is like one step of this creation. The four parts of this creation assumes many forms—viz. the four Vedas such as the Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva; the four types of creatures such as Swadej (those born from sweat and dampness, e.g. lice), Andaj (those born from an egg, e.g. birds), Jarayajuj (those that develop as an embryo lodged in the womb, e.g. man), and Uddbhij (those born from seeds, e.g. plants); the four types of Anthakarans (the inner self—which are Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (the faculty of concentration, paying attention and memory; knowledge and sub-conscious), and Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance); the four Ashrams (sections in a man's life, such as Brahmacharya, Grishastha, Vaanprastha and Sanyas Ashrams); the four Varnas (classes in society, such as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras) etc.]

3. One should know that out of the first step of this eclectic and divine Mantra (i.e. the Anushtup Chanda in which the Nrisingh Mantra was revealed to the creator Brahma), which is also known as Sam (because it can be sung melodiously like the hymns of the Sam Veda), were created the earth with its seven continents, the mountains and the oceans.

It is to be understood that from the second step of this Mantra were created the Yakshas (a type of demi-god), the Ghandharvas (celestial musicians) and the Apsaras (celestial lady dancers; the damsels living in the heaven) who inhabit the Antariksha (the lower heavens).

Again, one should understand that out of the third step of the same Mantra were created the Vasus¹, the Rudras², the Adityas³ and other Gods who inhabit the Duloka (the middle level of the heaven above the Antariksha and below the upper heaven where the Supreme Being lives).

Finally, it is to be understood that out of the fourth step of this divine Mantra was created the supreme Brahm who is most immaculate, without any taints or faults, most pure and holy, like the great Vyom or the sky that is fathomless, infinite, measureless, all-encompassing and all-pervading. This Brahm is completely free from Maya—i.e. Brahm is not at all affected by any kind of delusions and its negative effects.

When a living being understands this esoteric secret, he is able to obtain the essential fountain of Amrit (which is the elixir of eternity and eternal bliss, felicity and beatitude) (3).

[Note—¹The Vasus: These *Vasus* are the various patron Gods who preside over the essential elements of life. They are eight in number as follows—Vishnu who is the sustainer, Shiva who is the annihilator, Kuber who is the treasurer of the wealth of the Gods, the Sun, Water, Fire, Wealth represented by gems and gold, and ‘Ray’ representing glory and fame. The element ‘Fire’ is the most potent, prominent and essential force in creation, because without fire the world would freeze to death. Hence, the Fire-God is said to be the chief amongst the Vasus. The ‘fire’ element is the active force in creation and is primarily responsible for kindling the cosmic cauldron that set in motion the process, and once having set it in motion it then sustained it and would finally annihilate it by burning it to cinders. On the other hand, Lord Vishnu is the passive force of creation represented by his other form of Viraat Purush which is the primary male aspect of creation. Lord Vishnu, who is the sustainer of the creation, is the Lord of Laxmi who is the Goddess of wealth, and is the supreme creator because Brahma, the old patriarch of creation who created the visible world and its creatures, was himself born atop the divine lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu utilizes the services of Laxmi who is the personification of the active forces of creation to create, sustain and annihilate the world. The Vasus are symbolic Gods who represent those essentials aspects of creation without which life would be difficult to conceive and sustain and finally conclude.

The eight Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolise those primary necessities of life without which existence is not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun God (who provides energy and food) and his rays and radiance (i.e. sunlight and the energy that it provides), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire God (called Agni), (vii) any body of water such as a pond, a river etc., and (viii) holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation). According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following—Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon, and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets).

According to Purans, the eight Vasus are the following—Dhruv (ध्रुव), Dhar (धर), Som/Soma (सोम—the sap of an elixir-providing plant called Som/Soma which is used

during religious ceremonies as sanctified liquid offered to the Gods), Aapha (आप—water), Anil (अनिल—wind), Anal (अनल—fire), Pratush (प्रत्यूष) and Prabhaas (प्रभास).

These eight Vasus are the semi-Gods who symbolise the various types of assets needed to sustain this world. They therefore represent such assets as jewels, precious stones and gems, gold and other forms of wealth and property. Vasus also refers to the fire and water elements as well as their grosser forms as the terrestrial fire and water bodies such as ponds and lakes; to the virtue of radiance, splendour and glory; to the ray of light; to Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), Shiva, Sun, Vishnu, and a simple and pious gentleman.

The *Ekakchar Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 7, says that these Vasus are manifestations of Brahm in order to provide the creation with the necessities of life.

The *Atharva-shikha Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its Kandika (Canto) 1 says that the Vasus were created in the beginning of creation from the first Matra 'A' of OM representing the first leg of the supreme Brahm along with Brahma the creator, the Rig Veda, the Gayatri Chand and the Grahapatya Agni.

The *Brihajjabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Brahman 4, verse no. 16 lists the eight Vasus as follows—Ghar, Dhruv, Soma, Kripa, Anil, Anal, Pratyush and Prabhash.

²*Rudras*—There are said to be eleven Rudras which are the different forms of Lord Shiva. They are the following:--(i) Mannu, (ii) Manu, (iii) Mahinas, (iv) Mahaan, (v) Shiv, (vi) Ritdwaj, (vii) Ugrareta, (viii) Bhav, (ix) Kaal, (x) Vamdeo, and (xi) Dhritvrat. The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1, and Taittiriya Brahman 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened.

(2) The eleven Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following—Har, Bahuroop, Trayambak, Aparajeet, Shambhu, Vrishakapi, Kapardi, Raivat, Mrigvyadh, Sharva, and Kapaali.

(3) Lord Shiva has eleven forms, and one of them is 'Rudra', which literally means anger, wrath and vehemence. The Lord is considered to be the most enlightened of the Trinity Gods, and is therefore called 'Maheshwar'. He always remains in a meditative posture, always contemplating and meditating on the supreme Soul and the Truth. But still he shows anger and mercilessness, because one of his tasks is to punish the evil and sinful ones by ruthlessly slaying them in order to protect the good and righteous souls in the creation. Further, when his meditation and peace is disturbed he also becomes angry. He remains aloof and disinterested in the world, because he is very wise and enlightened, and he stays in the form of an ascetic. Ordinary people think that he is proud, arrogant and haughty because he does not give a damn to worldly formalities and niceties of behaviour. Shiva's failure to conform to set norms of proper and sane conduct makes him look most odd God.

The word 'Rudra' is literally used as a metaphor for anger, wrath, vehemence and cussedness. But this a very misleading title for Shiva because there are a number of great Upanishads which describe Rudra as none but the Supreme Being known as the transcendental Brahm from whom the entire creation has emerged, who sustains it and in whom the creation would finally collapse. It is this Brahm in the form of Rudra who is treated at the supreme Lord God of creation, and hence is called Maheshwar. Refer also to *Brihajjabal Upanishad*, Brahman 6, verse no. 12, note no. 2.

The *Rudra Hridaya Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition and *Atharvashir Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition are exclusively dedicated to this theme. The *Dakshin Murti Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda describes the esoteric significance

of the Shiva Tattva or the essential knowledge of Shiva who is the greatest Guru or moral preceptor and teacher of the creatures.

The Atharvashir Upanishad of Atharva Veda is especially relevant here because it explains the various epithets used to describe the virtues and glories of the supreme transcendental Brahm by Lord Rudra himself, and upon close reading it would be very clear that Rudra is describing Brahm when he describes himself.

³Adityas— The *twelve Adityas*—(a) According to mythology, there are said to be *twelve Adityas* which are simply as many forms of the Sun God. These are the revelations of Brahm in the form of the Sun to carry out the following functions of creation—(a) take care of the world (Rig Veda, 2/27/4); (b) are like the heads (Taiteriy Brahman, 1/2/3/3) and eyes (Jaimini, Uttar. 2/1/2/3) of all the creatures.

These twelve Adityas appear first in the Rig Veda 1/41/4-6 and 2/27. They are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods (Atharva Veda, 8/9/21). They are the following—the eight Vasus + Indra + Sun + Vishnu + Shiva = twelve in number.

(b) According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/5, the twelve months of the year represent these twelve Adityas, one month for one Aditya. In this Upanishad, sage Yagyavalkya draws a parallel between the twelve months of a year and the twelve Adityas for the following reasons—First, with the passage of one complete year, a corresponding number of years are subtracted from the total number of years that a person is supposed to live in this world. That is, death comes so much the nearer to him. The passage of the sun across the sky from dawn to dusk is used as a symbolic way of depicting the passage of the life of a man from his birth till his death. Since there are twelve mythological suns and twelve months in a year, a parallel is drawn between them and the life of a man.

Second, the whole life of an individual creature as well as the entire creation as a whole depends upon the various seasons that appear in a year. If even one of the seasons is disturbed, the entire cycle of life is disturbed correspondingly. For the smooth functioning of life, all the seasons must appear in a rhythmic and systematic manner, and it is a scientific fact that the seasons, upon which the life on earth is so dependent, also themselves depend upon the sun. That is why the Adityas are termed as being synonymous with the twelve months of the year as well as with the life cycle of creation.

(c) According to Vishnu Puran, the twelve Adityas are the following—Dhata, Aryama, Mitra, Varun, Anshu, Bhug, Indra, Vivaswaan, Pusha, Parjanya, Twashta and Vishnu.

The Sun God is worshipped by twelve names during the twelve months of a year. These names and the months are as follows—(1) as Dhata during the first Hindu month of Chaitra also known as Madhu (roughly corresponding to mid-March and mid-April); (2) as Aryama during the second Hindu month of Vaishakha also known as Madhav (roughly corresponding to mid-April to mid-May); (3) as Mitra during the third Hindu month of Jyestha also known as Shukra (roughly corresponding to mid-May and mid-June); (4) as Varun during the fourth Hindu month of Ashad also known as Shuchi (roughly corresponding to mid-June and mid-July); (5) as Indra during the fifth Hindu month of Sravan also known as Nabha (roughly corresponding to mid-July and mid-August); (6) as Vivaswan during the sixth Hindu month of Bhadrapad also known as Nabhasya (roughly corresponding to mid-August and mid-September); (7) as Pusha during the seventh Hindu month of Aashwani also known as Tapa (roughly corresponding to mid-September and mid-October); (8) as Kratu during the eighth Hindu month of Kartik also known as Tapasya (roughly corresponding to mid-October and mid-November); (9) as Anshu during the ninth Hindu month of Marga Shirsha also known as Saha (roughly corresponding to mid-November and mid-December); (10) as Bhag during the tenth Hindu month of Paush also known as Pushya (roughly corresponding to mid-

December and mid-January); (11) as Twasta during the eleventh Hindu month of Magh also known as Esh or Ish (roughly corresponding to mid-January and mid-February); and (12) as Vishnu during the twelfth Hindu month of Phalgun also known as Urj (roughly corresponding to mid-February and mid-March).

Since the Sun God is a manifestation of the Supreme Being known as Viraat Purush, he is like an Emperor who, during his sojourn across the sky which is like his vast realm, is accompanied by many sages called Rishis, celestial courtesans called Apsaras, celestial musicians called Gandharvas, servants called Rakshas or demons, guards known as Bhalls, and serpents called Naags. The Rishis walk in the front singing the Lord's glories in sacred hymns; the Apsaras dance to the music scores by Gandharvas; the Rakshas (demons) push the chariot from rear; the Bhalls take care of the chariot and guide it along, while the Naags pull it forward.

These attendants are also different like the forms in which the Sun God is worshipped in different months as described above. The list is outlined month-wise in the following sequence—Rishi, Apsara, Gandharva, Raksha, Bhalla and Naag.

- (1) The month of Chaitra—Rishi is Pulastya; Apsara is Kritsthal; Gandharva is Tumburu; Raksha is Heti; Bhalla is Rathkrit; and Naag is Vasuki.
- (2) The month of Vaishakha—Rishi is Pulaha; Apsara is Punjiksthal; Gandharva is Narad; Raksha is Praheti; Bhalla is Ojaha; and Naag is Kachaneer.
- (3) The month of Jyestha—Rishi is Atri; Apsara is Menaka; Gandharva is Hahaa; Raksha is Paurusheya; Bhalla is Rathaswan; and Naag is Takshak.
- (4) The month of Ashadha—Rishi is Vashishta; Apsara is Rambha; Gandharva is Huhu; Raksha is Shukra; Bhalla is Chitraswan; and Naag is Sahajanya.
- (5) The month of Sravan—Rishi is Angira; Apsara is Pramlocha; Gandharva is Vishwaavasu; Raksha is Varya; Bhalla is Srota; and Naag is Elapatra.
- (6) The month of Bhadrapad—Rishi is Bhrigu; Apsara is Anumlocha; Gandharva is Ugrasen; Raksha is Vyagha; Bhalla is Aasaan; and Naag is Shankhapal.
- (7) The month of Ashwin—Rishi is Gautam; Apsara is Ghritaachi; Gandharva is Dhananjay; Raksha is Vaat; Bhalla is Suruchi; and Naag is Sushen.
- (8) The month of Kartik—Rishi is Bhardwaj; Apsara is Varchaa; Gandharva is Parjanya; Raksha is Senjit; Bhalla is Vishwa; and Naag is Earaawat.
- (9) The month of Margashirsha—Rishi is Kashyap; Apsara is Urvashi; Gandharva is Ritsen; Raksha is Vidyu-chhatru; Bhalla is Taksharya; and Naag is Maashankha.
- (10) The month of Paush—Rishi is Aayu; Apsara is Purvachitti; Gandharva is Sfurja; Raksha is Arishtanemi; Bhalla is Uurna or Oorna; and Naag is Karkotak.
- (11) The month of Magh—Rishi is Jamdagni also known as Richik-tanaya; Apsara is Tilottama; Gandharva is Shatjit; Raksha is Brahmapet; Bhalla is Dhritrashtra; and Naag is Kambal.
- (12) The month of Phalgun—Rishi is Vishwamitra; Apsara is Rambha; Gandharva is Suryavarchaa; Raksha is Makhaapet; Bhalla is Satyajit; and Naag is Aswatar.]

4. All the four Vedas¹ along with their branches and sub-branches are the symbolic four legs or steps of this Mantra (4).

[Note—¹The *four Vedas* are the following—Rik/Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva.]

8. Prajapat Brahma continued—‘One should understand that all the Gods, the various forms of the divine fire, the living beings, the vital winds or airs (called the Prans), the organs of the body (i.e. the five organs of perception and five organs of action, called the Indris), the animals, the food, the Amrit (referring to the liquid that sustains and harbours life, i.e. water), Samraat (literally the Emperor, here referring to the highest form of

human benings), Swaraat (Brahma the creator), and Viraat (i.e. the Viraat Purush, Lord Vishnu)—all of them represent the first Paad (or leg or step) of the divine Sam Mantra (i.e. the Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantras of Gayatri such as Pranav or OM, and Laxmi as well as and Nrisingh were revealed).

Similarly, one should understand that the four Vedas such as the Rig/Rik, the Yajur, the Sam and the Atharva, the Sun and the divine Purush living in this Sun represent the second Paad (or leg or step) of the divine Sam Mantra (as described above). [The Sun is regarded as a visible manifestation of the majestic and stupendous glories of the Supreme Being. The external splendorous disc of the Sun is the gross body of this Supreme Being, and the eternal 'fire' that burns inside this disc and which empowers the Sun to shine brilliantly, to foster life in this world by its light, heat, warmth and energy, represents the subtle body of the Supreme Being that resides inside this disc. This subtle form is known as the 'Purush', the Supreme Being concealed as the dynamic 'fire' that lives inside the external body or the disc of the celestial Sun that actually makes the Sun what it is worth. This Supreme Being is the 'soul' of the Sun; he is revealed as the eternal 'fire' burning inside the Sun; his dynamism is manifested as the light, heat and energy emanating from the Sun. It is this concealed 'Purush' or the Supreme Being himself who is being referred to in this stanza.]

Likewise, one should understand that all the medicinal herbs and the Moon, which is the king amongst the stars, represent the third Paad (or leg or step) of the divine Sam Mantra (as described above).

Finally, one should understand that the Trinity Gods consisting of the creator Brahma, the sustainer and protector Vishnu, and the concluder Shiva, along with Indra (the king of Gods) and the imperishable supreme Lord of creation (i.e. Brahm) represent the fourth Paad (or leg or step) of the divine Sam Mantra (as described above).

A person who becomes acquainted with the esoteric meaning and the divine form of the holy Mantra is able to obtain eternity and blessedness (8).

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6. (b) The Prashna Upanishad:--

**(Canto 1, verse no. 4; Canto 2, verse nos. 2-3;
And Canto 6, verse no. 4)**

Canto 1, verse no. 4

4. Explaining the process of creation or the Genesis of creation, sage Pippalaad replied, 'Prajapati Brahma (the creator of this visible world inhabited by the living creature) did Tapa (to observe austerity, do penance and suffer hardship for some noble cause) with a desire to initiate the process of creation and propagate his subjects or off springs (i.e. to initiate the process of creation).

He created or produced a couple consisting of Rayi and Pran¹. He thought that these two off springs of his would fulfill his desire of creation or producing countless creatures of numerous species, of myriad qualities and character traits (4).

[Note—¹The word *Pran* refers to the life factors in creation, such as consciousness and the vital winds that infuse life and consciousness in the otherwise lifeless, inane and gross body of the creature. The word *Rayi* refers to the entity that harboured the Pran and helped it to manifest its stupendous quality of injecting life into this creation. Rayi was the dynamism of Pran on display. Thus, Rayi was synonymous with Prakriti or Nature. In the language of modern science, the Pran is likened to the latent energy in creation, while Rayi can be likened to the matter. It is the union or conjunction of the two, Pran and Rayi, or energy and matter that the entire visible world has come into existence.

The point to note here is that the concept of the ‘couple’ and the ‘need for their union’ or the need for intercourse was seeded by none other but the creator Brahma himself at the beginning of creation. In other words, the creatures that would come into being as a result of this initial seeding would also follow the same path—i.e. they would need a partner to multiply and propagate themselves.

According to the revered sage Adi Shankaracharya, the Pran was the latent fire element in creation, and Rayi was the food that harboured this Pran in its bosom and helped to manifest its stupendous life-creating and life-sustaining qualities when it was eaten by the creature. This was at the micro level of creation. At the macro level, the fire was represented by the Sun, the food was represented by the Moon because the latter is said to be a celestial pitcher of Som, the elixir that gives life and happiness. This is asserted in the next verse.]

Canto 2, verse nos. 2-3

2. Sage Pippalaad replied, ‘The elements of Nature such as the Akash or sky, Vayu (wind or air), Agni (fire), Aapha (water) and Prithivi (earth) are all deemed to be Gods. [These are the five Bhuts or primary elements of creation from which the gross body of the creature and the rest of the physical world is made. They are called Gods because they were created by the Supreme Being known as Brahm himself in the beginning of creation and were empowered by him to carry on with certain designated duties on behalf of the Lord. Hence, these elements represented one or the other qualities or attributes of Brahm separated from one another with the intention that their efforts are not duplicated. They were Gods because they had certain superior qualities in them which the other units of creation lacked, and also because the rest of the creation depended upon their mercy and grace. These elements are universal; wherever there is life they must be present in some form or the other. It is out of them that the rest of the visible creation has been moulded. Even if one is removed, the edifice of the entire world as we know it to be would crumble. In effect, these elements represented the dynamic aspect of Brahm. This was the first instance of the concept of ‘delegation of authority’ or ‘decentralization of power’ for the express purpose of making the functioning of creation smooth and hassle free. It was done to avoid confrontation between various powerful forces of Nature so that calamity could be avoided.]

This is followed by the following Gods—Mana (mind), Vaani (speech), Chakchu (eyes) and Srota (ear). [These represent the five organs of perception and five organs of

action.¹ These form the physical and visible aspect of the living body of the creature. Whereas the five primary Gods consisting of the Bhuts remain hidden, the entities mentioned in this stanza are the revealed forms of these primary Gods. The earth does not see or smell, but the fact that this element is astoundingly beautiful and produces myriad variety of fragrances is made vivid in the form of the faculty of sight located in the eye and the faculty of smell located in the nose. This logic can be extended to other Bhuts as well.]

All these Gods asserted that they were the ones who bear the body (representing the entire living world); that they were most important and responsible for creating and maintaining the body; that the body cannot survive without them; that the body itself is a revelation of their stupendous powers and potentials; that they are the primary cause for the entire creation coming into existence and depicting its glorious qualities (2).

[Note—¹The five organs of perception are eyes which see, the ears that hear, the nose that smells, the skin that feels, and the tongue that tastes. The five organs of action are the hands that accept and do deeds, the legs that carry the body from one place to another, the mouth that eats and supports the other organs by providing them with food besides enabling the body to speak, the excretory organs that help eliminate waste, and the genitals that help to procreate.]

3. The chief amongst these Gods is Pran, and he admonished the other Gods, saying, ‘All of you must stop bragging in vanity about your importance. The fact of the matter is that it is me who bears this body and give it protection with the help of my five manifestations¹ (3).

[Note—¹The five divisions or forms of Pran, the life consciousness that keeps the gross body of the creature alive are called Pran (breath), Apan, Saman, Vyan and Udan. These have been explained in note to verse no. 11 of Canto 1.

The superiority of Pran over all other patron Gods of the body have also been elucidated in the following Upanishads: Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, Brahman 3, verse nos. 2-27, Canto 6, Brahman 1, verse nos. 7-14; Chandogya Upanishad of Sam Veda, Canto 5, section 1, verse nos. 6-15.]

Canto 6, verse nos. 4-6

4. [The following narration outlines the Genesis of creation with a new perspective.]

That supreme Purush (i.e. the Viraat Purush, the invisible, macrocosmic and all-inclusive gross body of Brahm) created the Pran to begin with¹. From this Pran he then created successively the following elements of creation—Shraddha (the virtues of devotion, faith and belief), Akash (the sky or space element), Vayu (the wind or air element), Jyoti (the light and radiance personified in the form of the fire element), Aapa (the water element), Prithivi (the earth element), Indris (the different sense organs of the body), Mana (the thinking mind and the emotional heart), and Anna (the food that would sustain the other elements of creation which had combined to give shape to the creature).

From the Anna were created the following other units or elements of creation—the Virya (the sperm which is the carrier of life and the metaphor for valour, strength,

stamina, vitality, vigour, energy, potentials etc.), Tapa (austerity, penance and sufferance for some noble and auspicious cause), Mantras (the different mystical formulas consisting of letters or words or phrases which encapsulated various dynamic forces of Nature which could be invoked and harnessed by the creature and help him to utilise the latent cosmic energy, strength and other magnificent powers incorporated in these Mantras for the benefit of creation at large), Karma (the ability to do deeds and take action; the strength, energy and stamina to perform even difficult tasks), Loka (the various worlds, such as the mortal world where the creature lived on the earth, the lower heaven called the Antariksha where the junior Gods and the Spirits of dead creatures would live, and the upper heaven or Brahm Loka where the Supreme Being lives; the different worlds as experienced during the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep states of existence of the consciousness), and Naam (the name assigned to each independent creature).

These sixteen elements or units created by the Purush are the sixteen Kalaas or aspects or fractions of creation. In other words, this visible creation is made up of these sixteen units in different ratios just like a colourful picture in mosaic is prepared by an expert artisan from bits and pieces of glass or stone which are independent units in their own right but when incorporated in the mosaic that forms the colourful picture they become an inseparable and an integral part of the latter. Even if one piece is removed, the picture is disturbed (4).

[Note—¹Earlier in Canto 3, verse no. 3 it has been said that the Pran is created from the Atma, the pure consciousness. So, this Purush is the cosmic Atma or cosmic Consciousness that is the root from which the entire creation resembling a huge tree has emerged.]

5. Even as all the rivers having different currents, names, depths, widths, lengths and other characteristic features flow independently but ultimately fall into the ocean to become one with it and indistinguishable from it, thereby losing their independent existence and identity, in the same way the sixteen Kalaas of the supreme Purush spread out from him to expand and manifest themselves as the creation and its inhabitant creatures, but in the end they are withdrawn and collapse back into this Purush to become indistinguishable from him. They lose their independent characteristics and are then known only as Purush, the source and the single point of their origin¹ (5).

[Note--¹It is like the rays of the Sun spreading out from a single source, the brilliant disc of the Sun. When these rays are traced back to their origin, what remains is the Sun's disc. Also, when the Sun rises in the morning, these rays spread out from it to distant corners of the earth, but at the time of sunset they are withdrawn by the Sun, and these rays collapse into it to set with it. It is not possible for the rays to remain behind after the Sun has set; the rays have no independent existence without the Sun. Refer Canto 4, verse no. 2.

Likewise, the visible creation has no separate and independent existence from the Purush. This world, with its characteristic features and attributes, is a visible revelation of the sixteen Kalaas as listed in this verse. It is seen or perceived only in the presence of the Purush just like the case of this world being lighted by the light of the Sun and seen only in the latter's presence. Once the Purush decides to withdraw his Kalaas, the world would

vanish just like the world becomes shrouded in darkness when the Sun sets and withdraws its rays.]

6. Just like the spokes of a wheel are attached to its central hub, all the different Kalaas that constitute this world are attached to and are dependent upon one single core called the supreme Purush (the Supreme Being known as Brahm).

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6. (c) The Mundak Upanishad:--

**(Mundak 1, Section 1, verse no. 8; and
Mundak 2, Section 1, verse nos. 3-10)**

Mundak 1, Section 1, verse no. 8

8. When this supreme transcendental Brahm does Tapa (i.e. when he does some form of penance and austerity in order to fulfill some desire), he becomes a bit grosser (like the seed when it desires to generate a tree begins to show internal subtle activity by generating heat that aids in the division of cells and their multiplication which add to the seed's weight and size, or it's 'grossness').

As a result of this Tapa was produced the Anna or food (which is the 'reward' of the Tapa much like the seed sprouting into a sapling which would grow into a huge fruit-bearing tree).

From the Anna or food was created or produced the Pran—the vital life infusing and sustaining factors of creation which are necessary for the conception and support of life on earth.

From the Pran was created or produced the Mana—the thinking mind and the emotional heart. [The energy provided by the food eaten by the creature enables his mind to think and his heart to be active enough to exhibit emotions and sentiments, to have a liking or disliking for anything. A hungry and famished man would have no stamina and energy left to think about anything or be emotionally attached to anything. His whole being would be concentrated on acquiring food before he can think of anything else. This is the picture at the micro level of creation. The same thing applies at the macro level of creation. When the supreme Brahm who/which has been described as having none of the grossness associated with this world in verse no. 6 above begins to have desires, the chain reaction is set in motion, and one after the other all the units of creation come into existence.]

From the Mana is created or produced the Satya or the five primary Bhuts. [They are called 'Satya', literally meaning 'truth', because their presence in the forthcoming world would be undeniable. The 'Bhuts' are sky, air, fire, water and earth—obviously all

of them are undeniably evident in this world. The world which would ultimately form out of their combination would be deemed to be true because it is visibly seen and verified. From the perspective of the genesis of creation, once Brahm produced the Mana, the latter spread out its tentacles and wished to create the world. For this purpose it needed the 'bricks', and these Bhuts were the so-called bricks of creation.]

From these Bhuts came into being the humans, along with the rest of the world.

From them arose the concept of Karma—doing of deeds and taking of actions, and this resulted in the production of fruits or results according to their nature. This fruit or result or consequence was like the succulent fruit that tastes sweet like nectar. [In other words, this world is driven by the theory of Karma—i.e. if one wants any rewards or wishes to achieve success in anything or wants to fulfill his desires, then he is obliged to do something, or initiate 'Karma'. If he does not do any Karma, there would be no fruit, sweet or otherwise.] (8).

Mundak 2, Section 1, verse nos. 3-10

3. It is from Brahm, the imperishable and eternal cosmic Consciousness, that the Pran (the vital life sustaining forces of creation such as the vital winds), the Mana (the thinking mind and the emotional heart) and the various Indris (the sense organs—five of perception and five of action) are created.

It is from Brahm that the five primary elements Kham or Akash (sky), Vayu (air or wind), Jyoti (light, implying the fire element), Aapaha (water) and Prithivi (earth) which bears this world are created (3).

4. That whose head or crown is the fire element, the sun and the moon the two eyes, the directions the ears, the famous Vedas the speech, the air or wind the Pran (the vital life sustaining winds that keep the living being alive), the entire world the heart, and from whose legs the earth has been created—verily, that supreme cosmic transcendental Brahm is established as the Atma that resides in the inner self of all living beings in creation (4).

5. It is from this Purush (here referring to the Viraat Purush, the invisible, macrocosmic, all-inclusive gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm) that the cosmic fire is created.

The Sun is like the Samidha (the firewood used during the fire sacrifice) of this Brahm. [This is because the Sun lights up the entire heavens with its light much like the fire sacrifice 'lights up' or opens the gate of heaven for the chief patron of the sacrifice.]

It is from this fire kept burning with the help of the firewood that the nectar-like Soma (the elixir of life) was created. And from this Soma was created the Parjanya or water from the heavens which comes down upon earth as rains. [This refers to the creation of rains due to the heat of the Sun. The rains are produced because the water is evaporated from the oceans due to this heat, and then in due course of time is converted into clouds that shower this evaporated water as rains back upon the earth. It is called Soma or the elixir of life because rains are very essential for crops and for taking water to distant areas of the earth where rivers and their like cannot reach. Rains bring cheer and

joy to the creatures on earth who would have died for want of water, and it acts as a lubricant as well as a coolant to protect them against the unrelenting heat of the Sun. Had there been no rain, the earth would have scorched and turned into a parched dry terrain of lifeless rocks and withered shrubs. Hence, the rain is like the Soma that cheers the drinker.]

From the Parjanya (rains) was created the medicinal herbs—plants, trees, shrubs, creepers, and all other forms of vegetation that exist on earth.

These herbs create sperms in a man. When the man irrigates with the help of this sperm, the rest of the subjects (off springs) are produced. [That is, the plants when eaten as food in various forms support life in the man, providing the necessary nourishment, energy, stamina, strength and vitality to him. Even the animals depend upon plants for survival. It is the latent Pran or vital life supporting forces present in the food eaten that are extracted by the man and converted into his own life generating energy that is converted into sperms, the spark of life from which the next generation is born. In effect, the sperm is like the liquid Soma that produces life on earth when it irrigates the latter as rain. Likewise, the sperm irrigates the earth in the form of the female when the man transplants the sperm into the female, and this creates fresh life in the form of the off spring much like the rain creating fresh crops and new generation of plants on earth.] (5).

[Note—In the context of verse nos. 5-10 of the present section, refer also to the Prashna Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4.]

6. It is from this Viraat Purush that all the Richas (hymns of the Rig Veda), the Sam Veda and the Yajur Veda were created.

It is from him that the investiture and other religious ceremonies were created.

It is from him that the fire and other forms of religious sacrifices, all their accompanying formalities, and the obligatory charities that must accompany such exercises were created.

It is from him that the concept of Samvatsar (one full year consisting of all the seasons) originated. [That is, the entire concept of one cycle of life has its origin in the supreme Brahm. The Samvatsar is a metaphor of one cycle of origin and conclusion of the visible creation.]

It is from him that the Yajmaan (the chief patron on whose behalf the fire sacrifice is done; here also referring to the ancestors called the Prajaptis from whom this human race evolved) and the subjects of the vast kingdom, stretching as far as the rays of the moon go and the energy of the sun heats, were created. [The vast kingdom refers to the world that exists on earth because the rays of the moon are limited to lighting the earth and not the far reaches of the solar system. At the same time, it also includes all the planets of the solar system because all these planets are lighted by the energy of the sun which is transmitted in the form of sunlight. In the context of the fire sacrifice cited herein above, the vast kingdom is a metaphoric way of alluding to the numerous benefits that accrue as a result of successful completion of a fire sacrifice. When this kingdom is seen in the context of the Prajapati as the Yajmaan or the chief patron who presided over this great exercise of creation of this habitable world, it would obviously mean the off springs of Prajapati. These off springs are the living beings that inhabit every corner of this earth. In other words, whatever that exists in this visible world is a manifestation of Brahm in his macrocosmic all-pervading form known as the Viraat Purush.] (6).

7. It is from this Viraat Purush that the numerous Gods as well as the special Gods who are invoked during the fire sacrifices, along with the humans, the animals, the birds, the various life supporting vital winds such as Pran and Apaana etc., and the staple cereals such as rice and oat are created.

It is from him that the glorious virtues of Tapa (austerity, penance, sufferance for some noble cause), Shraddha (having faith, conviction and belief), Satya (truthfulness, sincerity and honesty), Brahmacharya (self control over the sense organs; continence and abstinence), along with the various laws and regulations that govern all phases of civil life, its ethics and morality were created (7).

8. It is from him (the Viraat Purush) that the seven grosser aspects of Pran were created. [These seven units of Pran are the two ears + two eyes + two nostrils + one tongue = seven. They are called 'Pran' because it is through them that the man is able to perceive the existence of the world. The ears help him to hear, the eyes to see, the nose to smell, and the tongue to taste.]

It is from these sense organs of perceptions that were produced the seven tongues of fire¹, the seven types of Samidhas or firewood², and the seven types of Homa or the offerings made to the fire sacrifice which are also classified into seven types³.

It is from the Viraat Purush that the seven Lokas or places inhabited by the creatures were created⁴. Besides these, the seven places where the Pran (life consciousness) finds its playing field, or the places which are kept alive by the Pran and where the Pran roams⁵ are also created from this Viraat Purush.

These seven units of creation are all established in the body of all living beings, and are created by the Purush who lives in its cave-like heart⁶ (8).

[Note—¹The *tongues of fire* refer to the sense of perceptions that are generated by each of the sense organs listed in this verse. The word 'tongue' has a metaphoric implication because one tastes anything with the tongue. Here it means that the man is able to 'taste' the irresistible charm and fascinating attractions of the material world only through the sense organs of perception. These perceptions light up the world for him and make him aware of its allurements. The seven tongues of the fire have been named in Canto 1, section 2, verse no. 4.

²The *Samidha* is the firewood that helps the fire of the sacrificial pit burning. This in the present context is a metaphor for the objects of the world that are relevant to each sense perception. For instance, the smells of the world are the firewood that keeps the fire of perception called smell burning; the sights of the world are the firewood that keeps the fire of perception called sight burning, and so on and so forth.

The seven types of Samidhas are firewood from seven types of trees are that used for this purpose as follows—Ashvattha (*Ficus religiosa*), Bilva (*Aegle marmelos*), Chandan (sandal wood), Devdaaru (pine), Khadira (*Acacia catechu*), Nayagrodha (Indian fig tree), and Palaas (*Butea frondosa*).

The wood from the following trees are not to be used for the purpose of Samidha—Bibhitak (*Terminalia bellerica*), Kapittha (wood apple), and Neem tree.

Each stick of the firewood should not be thicker than the thickness of the thumb, must have the bark on them, and should not be eaten by wood-worms or insects, or infected by any kind of germs—i.e. should be fresh.

³The *Homa* and *Yagya*—During fire sacrifices, Havi is offered to the consecrated sacred fire. This Havi is the material that is put into the consecrated sacred fire as an oblation during fire sacrifices. The process of offering is called Homa. Since Homa and Havi are an integral part of Yagya or the fire sacrifice, the latter is classified into seven types depending upon the type of Havi offered.

The Havis are generally the following things—(a) barley, rice and oat. (b) milk and clarified butter. (c) Juice of the Soma plant. (d) Besides these, animals were also offered as a sacrifice in earlier times.

Classification of Fire Sacrifice or Yagya depending upon the Homa used—

(i) Since doing Homa by the offering of a Havi is an integral part of Yagya or the fire sacrifice, the latter is classified into seven types depending upon the type of Havi offered. If the Havi consists of rice, barley, oat, milk and clarified butter, then the seven types of fire sacrifices are called the following—Agnyaadheya, Agnihotra, Darshapuranmaas (also called the Prakriti or original fire sacrifice), Chaturmaas, Aagrayan, Niruddhapashubandha, and Sautraamani.

All these fire sacrifices are performed in the three main fires—viz. the Garhyapatya, the Dakshinagni and Aahavaniya.

(ii) If the Havi is the juice of the Soma plant, then the fire sacrifice is called the Soma Yagyas—so called because the extract or juice of the Soma plant is offered as an offering. These seven Soma Yagyas are the following—Agnisthoma, Atyagnisthoma, Ukthya, Shodashi, Vaajpeya, Atraatra, and Aptoryama.

(iii) Then there are seven special types of fire sacrifices called the seven Paak Yagyas. They are the fire sacrifices done for the purpose of worldly gains and material prosperity. They are also called Kaamyeshthi Yaga, or literally that which is done with the aim of fulfilling some specific desires or aspirations. They are performed in the Garhyapatya Agni or the fire of the household with cooked offerings such as boiled grains mixed with Ghee (clarified butter).

These seven Paak Yagyas are the following—Huta, Prahuta, Aahuta, Shulagava, Baliharana, Pratyavarohana, and Ashtakaahoma.

The Homa in the present context is the knowledge of this world and the belief that it is the reality and one that is worth acquiring. This is likened to the offering made to the fire sacrifice because when one makes such offerings to the sacred fire, he is aware of the results that would accrue to him if the sacrifice is completed successfully. He keeps in mind the objective of making such offerings while going through the elaborate rituals. He is sure that the desires would be fulfilled. Likewise, the knowledge of this world motivates the man to divert his sense organs and their efforts towards his objective—which is getting access to the charms and material benefits that have their presence in the world. He does everything with only one aim in mind, and that is the fulfillment of his desires pertaining to the specific object that he finds charming, attractive and meaningful. This diversion, concentration and putting to use of all available resources towards achieving success in the fulfillment of one's desires pertaining to this material world is like offering Homa or oblations to the fire sacrifice with great devotion and diligence. No efforts are left undone to achieve success in the fire sacrifice.

Since such fire sacrifices are done with the desire of attaining worldly successes, the reward is also commensurate with it. In other words, the reward is worldly prosperity, wealth, fame, name, glory and majesty. In the context of the genesis of creation in which the Viraat Purush was involved, the reward was the creation of the Lokas as mentioned in this verse.

⁴The *seven Lokas* that were created as the result of the fire sacrifice, according to Brahmaand Puran (BP) and Vaaman Puran (VP), are the following lokas—‘Bhu’ or earth [BP-3,4,2-18]; ‘Bhuvaha’ or the space between the earth and the heaven [BP-3,4,2-19];

‘Swaha’ or the heavens known as Brahma’s abode; the space beyond the earth’s atmosphere; cosmic wind represented by the solar wind blows here [BP-3,4,2-20]; ‘Maha’ or the world created by Brahma pronouncing the divine word Maha meaning the great heaven or the outer space; it is believed that great sages and seers stay here; it is 1000 Yojans or appx. 8000 miles away from the Swaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-21; VP-52,21-22]; ‘Janaha’, so called because it was to be inhabited by the humans and the cows [BP-3,4,2-22; VP-52, 22]; ‘Tapaha’ or the Loka where great amount of austerity and penances are done; it is said to be 60 million Yojans or appx. 60 x 8 miles away from the Janaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-24; VP-52, 23]; and ‘Satyam’ or the truthful heaven where the supreme Lord has his abode; it is 300 million Yojans or appx. 300 x 8 miles beyond the Tapaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-25; VP-52, 24].

The seven Bhuvans or Lokas according to the view of this Upanishad as narrated above are the following—the seven organs of perception situated in the region of the head—viz. the two eyes + two ears + two nostrils + one tongue/mouth = seven. These are called the ‘Lokas’ because it is through them that the man becomes aware of the existence of the world.

⁵The seven *places where the Pran or life consciousness moves* are the following—the five organs of action such as the legs, hands, mouth, excretory and genitals, the thinking mind and the emotional heart = seven units. In other words, these organs of action along with the mind and the heart help the man to carry out his desires effectively. Once the organs of perceptions find out about the world and its charms, success in obtaining access to it would depend upon these organs of action aided and abetted by the mind and the heart.

These organs are included in the overall picture of the manifestation of Brahm as the world and its inhabitant creatures because the body of the creature is an image of the Viraat Purush, and as such to limit the existence of the vital life giving consciousness called Pran only to the organs of perception, and excluding the other organs such as the organs of action, the mind and the heart which nevertheless are equally important, would only distort the comprehensive picture of Brahm that the Upanishads attempt to depict.

⁶This ‘Purush’ is a clear reference to the Atma, the pure consciousness that resides in the subtle space of the creature’s heart. Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 1/4/1 affirms that the Purush is the Atma which is absolutely immaculate and sinless, and in 2/5/18 says that someone who resides in a ‘Pur’ or city (the ‘body’) is called a Purush. This resident is the Atma. Since the Atma is the Sovereign of the body, all the organs of the body and all its activities are like the functioning of the different state organs for the purpose of administration of the kingdom whose king is the Atma. In other words, those who are wise and self-realised do not think that ‘they’ are the doer of any fire sacrifice or any other form of deed in this world. They firmly believe that it is their Atma that is doing these deeds in order to keep the wheel of creation turning on behalf of Brahm. Here the word ‘they’ is the plural for the individual person who usually is identified by the physical body in this world which recognises forms, names and attributes as the identity of the creature instead of the Atma.]

9. It is from the Viraat Purush that all the oceans, the mountains and the rivers of different names are created.

It is from him that all the medicinal plants (herbs) and their essence or juices are produced.

It is this Viraat Purush that lives in all the living beings as their Atma that resides in their inner self¹ (9).

[Note—¹Refer Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, Brahman 4, verse no. 1, and Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 which also endorse exactly the same idea.]

10. The entire Vishwa (universe), all the Karmas (literally meaning the deeds, but here referring to the fire sacrifices), and the Tapa (austerity, penance and suffering of hardship for some noble cause)—verily, all of them are manifestations of the supreme Brahm.

That Brahm is the ‘absolute reality’ of creation, and is the ‘truthful essence’ which is like nectar of creation (10).

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6. (d) The Atharva-Shir Upanishad:--

(Kandika 6)

Indeed, everything is incorporated in Lord Rudra; there is nothing beyond Rudra; there was nothing before Rudra. There was nothing in the past before Rudra, and there would be nothing in the future also after Rudra.

It is this Rudra having thousands of legs and one head who lives or pervades uniformly in all the Bhuts or living beings in this world.

[Thousands of legs is a metaphoric way of saying that the same Brahm lives in the form of countless mobile creatures of this creation, and his having one head implies that all these creatures have only ‘one head’ or ‘one chief’ or ‘one Lord’. It also means that self-realisation and Brahm-realisation that comes with enlightenment is always of one kind, and it never varies from man to man though other characteristics differ between any given two individuals.]

It is from the ‘Akshar’ that Kaal came into existence.

[The word ‘Akshar’ means something that is imperishable, that does not decay and die, that is infinite, timeless and eternal, while the term ‘Kaal’ means the factor of ‘time’, a factor which implies imposition of limits because it also means an era or phase which must come to an end to pave the way for the next era or the next phase, and it also means ‘death’ because anything that is limited by time must come to an end or die, a situation which is the opposite of being imperishable and eternal. In other words, it is from the infinite, eternal and imperishable Brahm that this finite, mortal and perishable world came into being. This is because the world ‘has a beginning’ while Brahm has ‘no beginning’. It is like the case of a huge wave arising from the surface of the vast ocean, running its course and finally collapsing back on the surface of the ocean. Numerous waves appear from and disappear into the fathomless ocean, but do any of them affect the ocean? The wave has a limited life span, but is the ocean also subjected to this limitation of time? The answer is an unequivocal ‘no’. This applies also to Brahm which is like the cosmic ocean from which the numerous worlds have arisen, and in which they would vanish at the end of their life spans. ‘Akshar’ also means a letter, here indicating the ethereal word OM which stands for cosmic sound indicating the presence of vibrations in

the cosmic ether symbolising primal life in the universe. Anything that is born must come to an end. It is something which is not born that is not subjected to death. Sound had its origin in the cosmic ether because of some 'vibrations' produced in it, and therefore there must be some dynamic energy that must have produced these vibrations in the first place. The unknown and mystical source of this energy that generated the primary vibrations in the cosmic ether, vibrations that lay the foundation and the plinth of the grand structure known as the 'creation', is Brahm. It is from this Brahm that Akshar (the eternal ethereal sound) was produced, and it is eternal and infinite because it would survive the end of this world as the background vibration in ether. It is from this Akshar that the new generation of world would evolve. Hence, the perishable creation that is subjected to 'Kaal' is created from the imperishable 'Akshar'.]

It is because of this fact that Akshar (i.e. Brahm) is said to be eternal, infinite, all-pervading, omnipresent and all-inclusive.

[The wave arising on the surface of the ocean is essentially water of the ocean and nothing else. Ocean from which the wave is created is itself water and nothing else. If there was no water, there would be no ocean, and hence no wave. So it can be safely said that the wave is a representative of the ocean. Or, that the ocean, in its basic form as 'water', is present in all the waves that arise in all the parts of the ocean. Therefore, all the waves are basically and essentially the same thing having different existences and different locations in different periods of time. Similarly, it is the Akshar or letter that is present in all languages and tongues by which the world acquires knowledge, by which the scriptures were revealed, by which the individual creatures interact with each other, by which one expresses one's thoughts, and which is a vivid sign of life in this world. Existence of life somewhere can easily be deduced on the basis of sound even though neither the former nor the latter can be physically seen, smelt, touched and tasted. This is proved by the fact that scientists train their radio telescopes to distant corners of the universe to catch any bleep of sound, say in the form of radio waves emanating from remote corners of the universe, to determine the existence of life there. In modern medicine, sound is used to determine the state of internal organs and diagnose diseases inside the body of a patient, in a process known as the Ultrasound technique. Sound is used in oceanography to research what lies in the deep bowls of the vast ocean, thousands of feet below its surface where it is impossible for man to go physically. Similarly, we can determine that there is someone behind the wall if we hear him speak or some noise is heard even though we cannot see, touch, smell or taste the source. In the present case, it is Brahm that is the timeless 'Akshar' which is essentially present in all the entities called 'Kaal' that are limited by the factor of time.]

When this magnificent and glorious Rudra, who is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent, sleeps, it is then that all the creatures come to an end (i.e. the entire creation is concluded).

[From the metaphysical perspective, this 'sleep' refers to the Sushupta or deep sleep state of existence of consciousness. During this stage, both the external gross world of material objects as well as the subtle world seen in one's dream ceases to exist. This is like both of them coming to an end. But when the consciousness reverts from the Sushupta state back to the Swapna state of dreams it begins to dream once again, or when the man wakes up from sleep into the Jagrat state of wakefulness he begins to see and interact with the gross world once again. This would be akin to a new phase of creation

after its annihilation during the Sushupta state. Since Rudra is personified Brahm in his macrocosmic form as the Viraat Purush, as well as the individual creature in his microcosmic form, this stanza can be applied to both the levels of existences.]

When Rudra breathes, Tama (the lowest category of Guna or quality representing grossness) is created. From the Tama is created the Aapaha (water) element. When this Aapaha is rubbed (by Rudra) with the finger, it becomes thicker and is called 'Sishir'.

[Literally, the word 'Shishir' means the winter season, so it refers to viscous form of water that took the shape of cosmic 'semen'.] When this Shishir is churned, it produces froth. This transforms into the (cosmic) egg. And it is from this egg that Brahma the creator of the visible world was created.

From Brahma (the creator of the visible world) is created Vayu (the air or wind element). From Vayu is created the Omkar or the cosmic vibrations that translates into sound represented by the word OM. It is from this OM that Savitri (the 'brilliant rays' of knowledge) is born. From Savitri was born Gayatri (the first style of composition of verses in which the first hymns of the Vedas were revealed). And it is from this that the different Lokas or worlds were born.

[Brahma wished to create he world and make it visible. He not only created but wished to ensure that it endures. That is, after the initial phases when he started the ball rolling, he wanted this creation to be self-sustaining and self-perpetrating. For this purpose, he needed to disseminate information and the secrets of creation. That is, he needed a medium to spread his knowledge by speaking about it. So he first created the air. Then he shook the air to create waves of wind. Friction between these waves created the sound which traveled with the help of the wind moving in waves. This helped Brahma to spread the knowledge he had to the remotest corners of his creation in the form of 'rays of knowledge' personified as the goddess called Savitri. But knowledge needed a language and its grammar to be comprehensible. So he created the Gayatri—the compositions that came to be known as hymns. And this knowledge empowered Brahma to spread his knowledge of 'creation' far and wide, creating many worlds. This term 'many worlds' implies that the same knowledge was interpreted differently by different people who would create a world or theory of their own. Some of it would be destructive indicating the dominance of the factor of 'Kaal and Tama', while others would be constructive indicating the predominance of 'Akshar' or the grand virtues that provided eternity and imperishability.]

When Rudra does Tapa (i.e. when he involves himself in doing penance and austerity), honey in the form of Satya, or truthfulness that is eternal, immutable, steady, non-changing and imperishable, drips from him.

[It is like the case of ripe honeycomb from which honey begins to drip if the temperature is warm. Tapa means severe penances and austerities, and therefore when Rudra did Tapa, the virtue of Satya stored in his inner being began to effuse out like sap from a tree or honey from the honeycomb.]

When this happens, it is said to be the best form of Tapa.

[That is, when the creature takes the vow of truthfulness in all spheres of his life, he is doing the highest form of sacrifice which is like doing Tapa in practice. This is because being truthful is not always easy. He would have to suffer harsh circumstances or consequences due to this vow of truthfulness, but that is his litmus test.]

Verily, we pay our obeisance to and bow reverentially before the supreme transcendental Brahm who is revealed in the form of Aapaha (water element), Jyoti (fire element that gives light, energy and heat), Rasa (juices of life; nectar and essence of fruits, vegetables etc.), Amrit (elixir of life; the ambrosia that gives eternity and imperishability), Brahma (the creator), Bhu (the primary world of mortal creatures bound to this earth), Bhuvaha (the sky and the primary world where junior Gods and lower forms of spirits as well as the creatures that can fly, such as the birds, live), and Swaha (the heaven where the senior Gods live).

[Note—¹Sage *Atharva* was the first son of the creator Brahma, and when he came down on earth he started the practice of worshipping the Fire God. He was directly taught by his father Brahma, and so was the most wise, learned and enlightened sage who had knowledge of Brahm in right earnest. The Mantra of the Atharva Veda are attributed to him, and this Veda is known after him. Some of the Upanishads taught by sage Atharva are the following—Atharva Veda's Prashna Upanishad, Mundak Upanishad and Atharva Shikha Upanishad.]

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6. (e) **The Tripaadbhibhut Maha-narayan Upanishad:--**

(Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-12)

9. [This paragraph narrates the process of creation from the perspective of metaphysics, and likens it symbolically to the opening and closing of the eyes of the Supreme Being. In this context, refer Canto 3, paragraphs 1-6 of the present Upanishad, and Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 33-51 of Vishnu Puran.]

The origin, the development and growth, and the conclusion of the 'Mool Avidya', i.e. the primary ignorance that is the cause of all delusions and their horrendous consequences that not only create a web known as the world but also keep the creature trapped in it, corresponds to the opening and closing of the eyes of the cosmic Lord known as Adi-Narayan (the primordial Lord Vishnu who is also known as the Viraat Purush, the Primal Purush).

[That is, when the Lord opens his eyes it corresponds to the initiation of creation, when he closes his eyes it corresponds to the conclusion of creation, and the period when he keeps the eyes open corresponds to the intermediary phase of development and growth.]

When the universal Lord Adi-Narayan, who is blissful in his true self and self-contented in every way ('Atmaram'), so wishes and lifts his eyelids, it is then that the 'Avyakta' (the un-manifest, imperceptible and invisible) aspect of creation, called the 'Mool Prakriti' (the primary Nature), is created. This Avyakta represents the lower feet of the supreme transcendental Brahm (the cosmic Consciousness) which is the primary cause of all things that have come into existence, and which is expressed in the form of this existence in myriad of ways.

From the Avyakta or Mool Prakriti comes into being the ‘Mool Avidya’ or primary ignorance or the cause of falsehood.

[The reason behind calling the entire creation as ‘falsehood’ is that it is an imagination of the mind of the Lord Adi-Narayan, the Primal Purush. It is the latter’s ‘wishful thinking’ so to say, and therefore the creation has no actual existence. The world came into being (existence) because the Supreme Being desired or wished that it be so. If he had not so desired or wished, the creation wouldn’t have been in existence at all. But even the Lord himself was so fascinated and charmed by his own creation once it came into being that for a moment he forgot that it is an imaginary thing created out of his own wishful thinking, and instead began to regard it as the real thing. Hence, the rising of ‘Mool Avidya’ or the primary form of ignorance is regarded as having its base in this imaginary thinking that has its origin in the mind. Once it came into being, it acted as the breeding ground for ‘Maya’ or delusions. This tendency to first imagine something and then treat it as the real thing is known as ‘Mool Prakriti’ or the primary nature of all creatures. This explains why ‘Mool Prakriti’ gave rise to ‘Mool Avidya’—because this ‘primary or basic nature’ to imagine things that do not have substance and any truth in them as the real thing having a truthful form and existence is being ‘ignorant of the reality and the truth’.]

It is from the same ‘Avyakta’ and influenced by the ‘Avidya’ created by it that the entity referred to as ‘Sat’, i.e. an entity that is ‘truthful’ (Sat) but tainted by ‘ignorance’ (Avidya), was produced. This ‘Sat’ is that form of Brahm which is undeniably true but is tainted and corrupted by the influence of Avidya.

[This refers to the next step of creation when Avidya, or lack of knowledge, led to the primarily ‘truthful’ (‘Sat’) Brahm that is characterised by being without any attributes and qualifications to acquire certain attributes and qualifications as narrated below. The importance of ‘Sat’ in this context lies in the fact that though the creation that would now follow as a manifestation of Brahm is outwardly false but it must always be remembered that hidden in this external façade of falsehood is the immortal and immutable ‘truth’ of creation that is known as ‘Brahm’. This Brahm is ‘Avyakta’ because it is the pure consciousness that is hidden and secretly present in this creation. It is not visible from the outside like the rest of the creation’s physical body. The aspect of creation that is visible is the ‘Vyakta’ form of Brahm, while its invisible aspect is the ‘Avyakta’ form of Brahm. Since the world is marked by falsehoods and other impurities called the various ‘Vikaars’ which become imposed or transposed on Brahm for the simple reason that whatever that exists is nothing but Brahm, it logically follows that Brahm itself becomes tainted with the impurities so synonymous with this artificial creation. This creation is riddled with ignorance and artificiality because it is an ‘imaginary creation of the mind’ in the first place as outlined above. Therefore we conclude that the primary truthful and sublime form of Brahm becomes tainted and corrupted when it gets associated with this gross world and identified in its form.]

From the Avyakta were further created the ‘Mahatattva’—the essential virtues (‘Tattvas’) that granted greatness and magnificence to this creation, and imparted glory (‘Mahat’) to it and its creator.

From ‘Mahat’ was created ‘Ahankar’, or the sense of ego, pride and vanity (which created arrogance and haughtiness).

[The link is obvious. When one has some ‘Mahat’ or a sense of grandeur, majesty or greatness, it is natural that ‘Ahankar’ would be produced in its wake, and this would eventually subdue him.]

From Ahankar was created the five ‘Tanmatras’ or the five sense perceptions.

[The five Tanmatras are the perceptions of sound or words, touch, smell, taste and sight. When the primary consciousness representing the creature felt ‘proud’, or had Ahankar in it that it is enabled and empowered to live a life independently and has been given a body that has magnificent capabilities, it decided that it can hear, touch, smell, taste and see various things and interpret them or make sense of them. Thus were created the five Tanmatras of the creature’s body in which the Atma or the pure consciousness lived as his true ‘self’.]

From the five Tanmatras were created the five Bhuts such as the sky etc.

[The five Bhuts are the five primary elements of creation such as the sky, air, fire, water and earth. This is because to ‘hear’ there must be a sound, and sound needs ‘sky or space’ to travel and the medium of ‘air’ to be transported in the form of waves. Further, it was in the cosmic ether that the first waves were created that produced ‘sound’. Similarly for example, ‘water’ was needed to ‘taste’ something as the chemicals present in anything tasted needed a medium to dissolve and interact with each other to generate the sense of taste. And so on and so forth.]

From these five Bhuts or primary elements there came into being an ‘Anda’—or the ‘cosmic egg’. [This ‘Anda’ or the cosmic egg represented a grosser form that resulted when all these primary elements of creation interacted with each other; the Anda was a result of this interaction. It is like the case of the male sperm fertilising the female ova to produce the egg from which develops the embryo which in turn metamorphoses into a complex creature with a gross, visible and physical body that has no resemblance to the original inputs of the sperm and the ova which are in themselves very microscopic in form.]

This primary form of creation represents one Paad or feet or aspect of the supreme Brahm.

[Therefore, the embryo and the visible world that develops from this cosmic Anda or egg is only one Paad of Brahm. And this Paad is the lower feet of Brahm as already said in stanza 2 of this paragraph. The other Paads of Brahm would therefore represent the vast creation much beyond the known world.] (9).

[Note—It ought to be noted here that paragraphs 9-10 describe the 18 Tattvas or essential elements of creation. They are as follows—Avyakta, Mool Prakriti, Mool Avidya, Sat, Mahatattva, Ahankar, the five Tanmatras, the five Bhuts, Anda or Hiranyagarbh, and Viraat.]

10. This cosmic egg (‘Anda’) has the primary Lord known as Narayan as its basic empowering Authority as well as its essential ingredient. This Lord Narayan is primarily beyond all Gunas (i.e. who has no specific attributes and is beyond conventional definitions), is immaculate and pure Truth personified, and is eternally blissful, but he has assumed a form that has attributes and willingly allows himself to be surrounded by Maya (delusions) because he so wishes and wants to display his maverick powers in a playful manner.

In other words, the fact that the primarily formless and attributeless Lord Narayan has allowed himself to be mired by Avidya (ignorance) and Maya (delusions) that led the formation of the cosmic Anda (egg) that would eventually create the Brahmaand (universe) is so because the Lord had willingly wished it to be so. He wanted a little fun and play, and therefore sportingly created this world and its accompanying delusions.

[This paragraph describes the cause of this creation coming into being. The cause is the Lord's desire to do something magical and out of the ordinary; it was due to his 'wish'. When this happened, the first thing was the appearance of the cosmic 'egg' which was the future universe in its primitive, basic and miniature form. This cosmic egg was the 'causal body' of Brahm because it contained or harboured 'the spark of life in the form of consciousness'. It was 'causal' because it acted as the 'cause' of the universe taking shape and coming into being. Hence, Brahm resided in this cosmic Anda as its Atma or soul. Had it not been for the presence of Brahm in it, the cosmic egg would be like any other 'unfertilised egg' which does 'not' harbour life. And even if this 'unfertilised egg' grew and somehow matured into the shape of the universe, the latter would not have harboured life either because of the absence of Brahm or consciousness in it. This lifeless universe would be without an Atma.]

Lord Narayan is none else but Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness that is behind everything in existence. Since the cosmic 'Anda' or egg harbours the future world in its bosom, it is sure to have the spark of 'life and consciousness' in it, for otherwise it would be inane and dead. So it is said that Narayan (symbolising 'life' and 'consciousness') is uniformly present in this cosmic egg as its vital ingredient; this cosmic egg is completely soaked in life and consciousness which are manifestations of Adi-Narayan; the cosmic egg is therefore a manifestation of Adi-Narayan.

[This 'Adi-Narayan' is a term used to imply the Primal Purush from whom the entire gamut of creation has emerged. He is variously regarded as being the supreme Brahm who is un-manifest cosmic Consciousness that is all-pervading, all-encompassing and beyond any limitations imposed by definitions, as well as Lord Vishnu who resides in Vaikunth, and who is variously named as Narayan, Parmatma, Viraat Purush and Hiranyagarbha. Refer Canto 1, paragraph 5-6.]

The egg therefore has the supreme Lord concealed in it in a subtle form. This Lord is the cause of countless universes coming into being, their sustenance and their conclusion. He is the primary cause of all causes, i.e. he is personified Prakriti or Nature. He is beyond the reach and purview of Maya or delusions, though Maya is created by him and he has allowed himself to be surrounded by Maya in order to create this creation. He is a personified state of consciousness known as Turiya, which is the state of existence which is transcendental in form and nature. It is this supreme and majestic Lord who resides subtly and imperceptibly in the cosmic egg (Anda) described here.

[According to Vedanta, this form of Brahm is known as 'Hiranyagarbha', and is also called 'Brahma, the creator'. It is so because from this egg the rest of the creation would eventually evolve. So, Hiranyagarbha is the subtle body of Brahm at the cosmic level of creation. The subtle body consists of the twin instruments of the mind and the intellect which are required to undertake the complex task of creation. This is symbolised by Brahma, the creator, as he is said to have pronounced the Vedas which are the eternal repositories of knowledge and wisdom. It was the creative and imaginative aspect of the cosmic 'mind' that visualised what shape this universe would take, and it was the

intelligent and sharp cosmic 'intellect' that actually researched and gave effect to the imaginary conceptions of the mind. Hence, Brahma the creator is regarded as the macrocosmic 'subtle body' of creation. He is also like the cosmic egg because it was he who had given this creation its shape just like the body of a creature is given its shape inside the shell of the egg even before it hatches.]

From this evolves the 'Viraat Purush' which is the 'gross body' of the supreme transcendental Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation. It is this Viraat Purush from which the rest of creation has emerged. Only a body that has 'life' and 'consciousness' in it is adored and shown attention by all; it is such a body that does not decay and perish. Once the factors of life and consciousness leave the body, it begins to decay and perish rapidly. Hence, this shows that the 'imperishable and eternal' Brahm in the form of the 'cosmic Consciousness' has himself revealed in the form of the Viraat Purush at the macrocosmic level of creation, and by extension in the form of the individual creature that this Viraat transforms into at the microcosmic level of creation.

[The Viraat Purush is the sum-total of all the gross bodies in creation. All things that have a shape and form are created from the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm known as the Viraat Purush. In other words, what the individual creature is to Brahm at the microcosmic level of creation, the Viraat Purush bears the same relationship with Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation. The 'gross body' has various sense organs or perceptions and actions—so when this Viraat transformed himself as a living being, the latter also depicted these sense organs. They are his five organs of perception such as the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the skin, and the five organs of action such as the hand, the leg, the mouth, the genitals and the excretory.]

Therefore we conclude that it is the same Brahm in the form of the cosmic Consciousness that is at the core of life and creation at all levels of its evolution, such as the causal body, the subtle body and the gross body (10).

11. [Paragraph no. 11 describes the majestic form and glories of the Viraat Purush. Refer also Canto 6, paragraph no. 8 and 11.]

The Viraat Purush¹, the macrocosmic, all-encompassing and all-pervading form of the Supreme Being, has countless heads, eyes, hands and legs.

[Refer also to This is a symbolic way to highlight the fact that the Viraat is the sum-total of all the gross bodies that live in this creation. The Viraat Purush is a metaphor for the all-inclusive form and all-encompassing nature of the supreme Brahm, as the former represents all living organisms in this creation. According to the theory of Genesis of Creation as outlined in the Upanishads, it is from the Viraat Purush that the whole creation has been moulded; the creation is a manifestation of the Viraat Purush. Since the Viraat is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm as outlined in the forgoing paragraphs, it follows that the creation moulded out of this Viraat is also a manifestation of the Brahm. Therefore, this creation represents the gross body of Brahm. It is this Viraat Purush who created the creature in his own image. Since there are uncountable forms and varieties of creatures or living beings in this creation, from the single cell organisms to the most complex human, and each individual is an image of the Viraat, it is easy to understand the meaning and import of the statement that the Viraat has thousands of hands, mouths etc. as stated above. Besides this point, another interpretation is that Brahm in the form of the

Viraat lives in all the places of this creation at the same time. This is in consonance with the eclectic virtue of Brahm as being omnipresent all-encompassing and all-pervading.]

The Viraat Purush, having countless ears², surrounds the entire creation from all sides and uniformly pervades in it. He is omnipresent, all-pervading and all-encompassing.

He (the Viraat Purush) is both Saguna and Nirguna.

[That is, the Lord has revealed himself in numerous forms, thereby becoming 'Saguna'—or the one with discernible characteristics, definable attributes and specific qualities. At the same time, the Lord has no visible form as his primary nature is formless and without attributes—i.e. he is 'Nirguna'. This concept has been elaborately described earlier in paragraphs 2-8 of this present Canto 2.]

He (the Viraat Purush) is a personification of the grand virtues of Gyan (knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment), Bal (strength, valour, vitality and potent), Aishwarya (fame, majesty, grandeur, magnificence, glory), Shakti (power, dynamism, energy, punch and vitality), and Tej (splendour, radiance, glory, energy, magnificence, dynamism, agility and speed).

He (the Viraat Purush) is established in the form of innumerable worlds of diverse varieties and forms.

It is he (the Viraat Purush) who is the supreme Lord of creation known as the Parmatma, the supreme Atma or soul of creation. He is an embodiment of eternal and unbound bliss, as well as is endowed with all the noble and auspicious virtues and glories that exist in this creation.

He (the Viraat Purush) is absolutely independent (because he is supreme and not subservient to anything). He is all-knowing and omniscient. He is almighty and all-powerful. He is the ultimate controller of everything in existence. And he is an image of all the most auspicious virtues that ensure all-round well being in this creation.

He (the Viraat Purush) is established in the form of a majestic fount of immense 'Tej' (splendour, radiance, glory, energy, magnificence, dynamism etc.) that cannot be described, is endless, and is most divine.

This Supreme Being having the above grand and magnificent virtues pervades throughout the cosmic Anda created from the Avyakta due to Avidya (as narrated in paragraph no. 9). This Anda or the cosmic egg is the basis of Maha-Maya that has surrounded the Supreme Being (i.e. it is the basis of creation of the great delusion because it is in this form of the cosmic egg that the Supreme Being had allowed himself to assume a form which is not in consonance with his primary nature of being formless).

[As is clear by now, the Supreme Being that is referred to here is the cosmic Consciousness that infuses life in the cosmic egg. The egg has been literally 'fertilised' by Brahm, the Supreme Being, who has passed on to it his 'genes' in the form of 'consciousness' possessing all the virtues enumerated herein above. Therefore, these virtues of Brahm would naturally be passed on to the 'embryo' that developed in this egg, and the subsequent 'creation' that would emerge from this cosmic egg upon its maturity. It follows that this is the evident proof why Brahma known as Hiranyagarbha representing the 'embryo', and Vishnu known as the Viraat Purush representing the 'creation' would be an image or a 'gene-bearer' of Brahm, the Supreme Being. Now, once the 'formless' (or Nirguna and Avyakta) Brahm assumes the 'formed' shape of an egg (becomes Saguna and Vyakta) he is bound to be affected by the characteristics of

something that has a ‘form’, something that is ‘Saguna’ (one that has various Gunas or qualities) and ‘Vyakta’ (expressed, revealed). In other words, the Brahm which was without any Maya (delusions) prior to the entire process of creation rolling out has now become surrounded by it, or tainted and affected by it.]

Therefore, the ‘Maha-Maya’ is the gross body created out of delusions of the almighty Lord God known as Brahm who is naturally and inherently almighty, all-powerful, universal, uniform, non-dual, and an embodiment of un-bound bliss and beatitude.

It is in each pore of the macrocosmic form of Brahm known as the Viraat Purush that numerous universes or worlds and their gross things are born or created. Each one of them is a revelation of the same Lord Narayan; they are images of the same Brahm. [It is because, as has been explained above, they carry the genes of their parent known as Brahm. In this context, refer to Canto 3, paragraph nos. 11-12 which will make it clear that the ‘Viraat Purush’ meant here is not the one which is regarded as being synonymous with Vishnu, but is the ‘Adi-Viraat Purush’ that precedes Vishnu and from whom even Vishnu, the commonly known form of Viraat, was created. This creation has been visualised as being in different layers like many concentric circles, one higher than its previous one. This concept will be discussed in Canto 6.] (11).

[Note—¹The *Viraat Purush* is the subtlest form in which Brahm revealed itself when it had decided to initiate the process of creation. Though ‘subtlest’ in relation to the rest of creation, but in its self the Viraat Purush was the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm. It was from this Viraat Purush that the rest of the creation was moulded—refer Aiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda, Canto 1, Section 1, verse nos. 1-4; and Canto 1, Section 3, verse nos. 1-2. The word ‘Viraat’ itself means colossus, huge, immense, large and vast. This manifestation of Brahm covered each minute pore of creation; it pervaded throughout the space that would eventually form the area of the cosmos or the universe. It encompassed everything; it included everything. It encircled or surrounded everything from the outside. It was called ‘Viraat’ precisely for this reason. Again, it was called ‘Purush’ because it provided the vital spark of life in the form of ‘consciousness’ and ‘Pran’ into the otherwise lifeless primordial cosmic gel so that it could become active, alive and show dynamism. It was called ‘Purush’ also because Brahm, in the form of the ‘consciousness’, lived in this creation uniformly and universally in such a way that the two were inseparable from one another, and to give life to the nascent creation as well as to control it from within. When the creation came into being, this Brahm entered in the body of the creature to take up residence in the living being’s body—refer Aiteriya Upanishad, Canto 1, Section 3, verse nos. 12-14.

The word *Purush* has been defined in *Brihad Aranyak Upanishad*, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 explicitly as the cosmic all-pervading macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being, called the Viraat Purush, who had entered each and every body of all the creatures and had taken up his residence there. The word Purush consists of two parts—viz. ‘Pur’ meaning a city or an abode, and ‘Ush’ means the one who lives there. Hence, the ‘Viraat Purush’ is the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm that lives in each aspect of this creation, pervading throughout it, and including in its ambit everything that exists in any form.

The entire creation was produced by Brahm—refer Atharva Veda’s Mundak Upanishad, Munkak 2, Section 1, verse nos. 1-8; Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shewatshwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 4.

Brahm resides in the subtle space of the heart of the creature—refer Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 2, Section 1, verse nos. 9-10; Mundak 2, Section 2, verse no. 1; Mundak 3, Section 1, verse no. 4; Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 11.

Brahm resides in the gross body of the creature—refer Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 3, Section 1, verse no. 4-5; Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewatshwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 7.

Brahm is the controller of the entire creation—refer Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 2, Section 2, verse no. 7; Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 1, 7.

²The phrase 'having countless ears' simply means that Brahm, in the form of the Viraat Purush, assumed as many forms as there were creatures who could hear. It also means that Brahm, as the living being's consciousness, heard or became aware of everything that was happening in this creation.

The fact that the Viraat Purush has countless ears and as many eyes and mouths has been also stressed in the present Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 6, paragraph no. 11, as well as in Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 3, 11, 14, 16.

It is a metaphoric way of saying that a wise man who knows the truth of Brahm is also one who is well aware of everything in this creation; nothing is hidden from his knowledge; he is wise, erudite, knowledgeable, enlightened, omniscient and all-knowing. He receives all information and knowledge, but then picks and chooses what is auspicious and righteous. He is not 'deaf' to the teaching of the scriptures. It ought to be noted here that the creature, the living being, especially the human being, is said to be replica of the Viraat Purush. Refer Aiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda, Canto 1, Section 2, verse no. 3.]

12. [This paragraph describes the concept of uniformity in creation, the eclectic principle of non-duality, in the context of genesis of creation at two levels—one at the macrocosmic and invisible level of the vast creation that consists of Brahma and Viraat (Vishnu), and the other at the microcosmic level of the visible creation consisting of the Prajapati who is the first male on earth and who produced off springs who would eventually populate it. While the cosmic entities such as the sun, the moon and the stars along with everything else in this creation are the off springs of the Viraat Purush, the visible world where humans live, i.e. the earth and its inhabitants were the off springs of Brahma the creator in his manifested form as the Prajapati—literally meaning the Lord of his subjects. By extension, all the Gods, all the creatures and all other entities in this creation, both at the macro as well as the micro level of creation, are manifestations of the same Brahm known as Narayan.]

It is from Narayan, or the Supreme Being known as Brahm, that Hiranyagarbha (the macrocosmic subtle body of Brahm, also known as Brahma the creator) was born or created.

It is from Narayan that the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, was born or created.

It is from Narayan that the Prajapati was born. It was this Prajapati who is the one who produced off springs who in turn would populate this world.

[Hence, he is the first Male from whom the rest of the creatures who eventually populated and ruled over this earth were born. He is the 'first born' on this earth, and therefore is regarded as a manifestation of the cosmic creator of the physical world known as Brahma. Hence, Brahma, the cosmic creator of this physical world, is often also called 'Prajapati Brahma'. The word 'Prajapati' literally means one who is the Lord of his subjects and is responsible for their care and welfare.]

It is from Narayan that the eleven Rudras (the various cosmic forms or aspects of Lord Shiva, the concluder and one of the Gods of the Trinity) were born or created. [The 11 *Rudras* have been enumerated in note no. 2 of verse no. 3 of Canto 1 of the Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad.]

It is from Narayan that the entire creation and its numerous worlds were born or created.

It is from Narayan that Indra (the chief of Gods) was born or created.

[The word 'Indra' is derived from the root 'Indri' meaning sense organs. Hence, he represents the controlling power of Brahm that helps the creature to remain in control of his sense organs, and through them over the world.]

It is from Narayan that all the rest of the Gods were born or created.

[These 'Gods' represent the various forces of Nature and the numerous powers of Brahm that are necessary to regulate the creation and keep it functioning properly. Hence, they are personifications of these universal forces and powers of Brahm; they are metaphors for various stupendous abilities, the powerful authority and the dynamism of Brahm at the cosmic level.]

It is from Narayan that the twelve Adityas or the Sun Gods are born or created. [The 12 *Adityas* have been enumerated in note no. 3 of verse no. 3 of Canto 1 of the Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad.]

In fact, it is from Narayan that all the eight Vasus (the patron deities who preside over the various forms of wealth created in order to sustain this creation and meet its needs), all the Rishis (the exalted and wise sages and seers), all the living beings, and all the Chandas (the innumerable hymns that constitute the body of all the scriptures that are regarded as repositories of knowledge and wisdom) were born or created.

[The 8 *Vasus* have been enumerated in note no. 1 of verse no. 3 of Canto 1 of the Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad.]

It is from Narayan that each one of them are born and derive their abilities to live, act and do anything, and it is in Narayan in whom they all dissolve in the end.

Hence, it is Narayan who is deemed to be eternal, infinite, unchanging, uniform, universal, imperishable and constant. It is Narayan who is deemed to be the most exalted and supreme. It is Narayan who is deemed to be self-illuminated.

Indeed, everything and everyone in creation is none but Narayan.

It is Narayan who is Brahma the creator.

It is Narayan who is Shiva the concluder.

It is Narayan who is Indra, the chief God.

It is Narayan who has manifested himself as all the chief directions of the compass as well as the corners of these directions (i.e. he is omnipresent and all-pervading in this creation; there is no spot where Narayan is not present).

It is Narayan who is Kaal (time and circumstance in all dimensions).

It is Narayan who is revealed in the form of all deeds and actions.

It is Narayan who is both the formed aspect of creation, called the 'Murta' or Saguna creation, as well as the unformed aspect, called the 'Amurta' or Nirguna creation.

It is Narayan who is a personified form of all causes that lead to consequences, as well as these consequences themselves. It is Narayan who is both the cause and the action that results from this cause. Indeed, Narayan even goes beyond the concept of a cause and its effect to transcend them and remain neutral and unaffected.

[That is, inspite of the fact that it is Narayan who is at the root of all deeds and actions in this world, being their cause as he is the supreme inspirer or motivator, he himself remains detached and non-involved in either the deeds or their results.]

It is Narayan who is the only God or Authority that possesses and exhibits such auspicious and noble divine virtues as being the supreme fount of eternal illumination and light because he is self-illuminated, as being a personification of eternal and profound bliss and happiness that comes with Brahm-realisation, as being constant, uniform and eternal, as being unique because he is without an alternative and parallel, as being faultless, taintless, without any blemishes and corruptions, as being indescribable and indefinable, and as being the only absolutely immaculate, holy, pure and divine Lord of creation.

Narayan is so divine, majestic, magnificent, great, glorious and exalted that he is comparable to none. At the same time, he exhibits exemplary humility and remarkable simplicity by not being, or pretending to be, greater than anyone or anything in this creation.

Indeed, those wise and enlightened souls who come to grips with this majestic and mystical divine truth about Narayan by overcoming all forms of doubts and confusions are able to pierce or overcome all fetters (representing ignorance and delusions), and as a consequence they find freedom and deliverance for themselves. They do find freedom and deliverance, and there is no doubt in it!

Those who realise this truth and worship Lord Narayan with this wisdom and erudition are able to not only attain the Lord but also become one with him. Verily, such a man becomes a personification of Narayan himself (12).

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6. (f) The Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad:--

(Paragraph nos. 18, 20-21)

18. [This verse describes the genesis of creation when the creator of the visible world, i.e. Brahma, explained to the assembled Gods the importance of the esoteric Mantra of Lord Krishna. The basic idea is that whatever exists in this creation is a manifestation of one of the many aspects of the same Supreme Being who is known by various names.]

The sages said to Brahma, 'If this is the case, then please explain the meaning and importance of this Mantra to us.'

Brahma replied, 'During my lifetime in the previous life, I had been constantly meditating and contemplating upon the Parmeshwar, the Supreme Being, and had offered worship and obeisance to him. When half of my life had been spent in such devotion, the Lord's attention fell upon me. The Viraat Purush (Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being) was pleased with me and appeared before me as Gopal (the dark complexioned Lord known as Krishna who is a benevolent and most gracious caretaker of those who are dependent upon him or are his subjects in the kingdom known as this world).

I bowed most reverentially before him and prostrated at his holy feet. Being extremely pleased with me, and being of a gracious nature and of a kind heart he preached me the great Mantra having eighteen letters (verse no. 9, 16) to empower me to start the process of creation. Having done so, the Lord vanished from sight. This Mantra was an image of the Lord himself; it was a personified or revealed form of the Lord; it had all the dynamism, vitality, virility, strength, authority, power and energy of the Lord encapsulated in its words.

In due course of time when I desired to initiate the process of creation, the Lord inspired and enabled me to visualize the forthcoming world in its myriad forms and countless variations of all imaginable hues, formats and connotations in each of the letters of this Mantra. In other words, this time round the Lord revealed himself to me not in his physical form as Gopal but personified as the letters of this Mantra. Since the world was encapsulated in this Mantra, and this Mantra was a personified form of the Lord, it follows that whatever that exists in this world (creation) is a manifested form of the Lord himself, and nothing else.

Now, I employed the first Paad or step of the Mantra (i.e. 'Klim/Klin(g)') to create the water element from its letter 'Ka' ('Klim/Klin(g)'), the earth from the letter 'La' ('Klim/Klin(g)'), the fire element from the letter 'Ee' ('Klim/Klin(g)'), the moon from the Anuswar (Klim/Klin(g)), and a combination of these letters to create the sun represented by the full Beej Mantra 'Klim/Klin(g)'.

From the second Paad or step of the Mantra, i.e. 'Krishnaaye', I created the sky and the air that filled it.

From the third Paad or step of the Mantra, i.e. 'Govindaaye', I created the Kamdhenu cow (the all wish-fulfilling cow of the gods) along with the Vedas and other bodies of knowledge.

From the fourth Paad or step of the Mantra, i.e. 'Gopijan-Vallabhaaye', I created the males and the females who would inhabit the forthcoming creation.

And finally, from the fifth Paad or step of the Mantra, i.e. 'Swaha', I created the rest of the mobile and immobile creation (18).

20. Some sages have a different take on the eighteen-letter Mantra (mentioned in verse no. 9). They assert that the earth element was formed out of the first Paad or step (i.e. 'Klim/Klin(g)'). The water element was formed out of the second Paad or step (which is Krishnaaye). The Tej or fire element was formed out of the third Paad or step (which is Govindaaye). The air or wind element was formed out of the fourth Paad or step (which is Gopijan-Vallabhaaye). And the sky element was formed out of the fifth Paad or step (which is Swaha).

This eighteen-letter Mantra of Lord Krishna is worshipped by the devotees and followers of Vishnu. It relates to the revelation of Lord Krishna's cosmic, omnipresent,

omnipotent, all-pervading and all-encompassing form in creation in the form of the five primary elements known as Vyahritis from which the rest of creation was moulded.

One should always do Japa with this Mantra in order to overcome the darkness of ignorance and delusions and obtain freedom from their frightening effects (20).

[Note—Refer Section 2, Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 24 for a different take of this version of creation.]

21. In this connection, the following episode is famous. The magnificent Mantra from the first step of which the earth was created, from the second step of which the water was created, from the third step of which the Tej (dynamic energy, fire) was created, from the fourth step of which the air/wind was created, and from the fifth step of which the sky was created—it is the same Mantra that was invoked by the great ancient king Chandradwaj to reach the divine abode of Lord Vishnu, the abode known as Param Pad or the supreme stature of existence (21).

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6. (g) The Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad:--

(Paragraph nos. 8, 23-24, 26)

8. Sage Durvasa narrated to Radha, the chief of the ladies who assembled at his hermitage to enquire about the reality of Lord Krishna, how Brahma, the creator of the visible world, was born. The sage said, 'It is a well established fact that prior to the beginning of creation there was only one divine entity known as Adi-Narayan. The entire creation remained dissolved in him, and it is from him that it emerged at the time of creation.

When he made a mental resolve to initiate the process of creation, a divine lotus emerged from his navel, and from it was born the creator Brahma. Lord Narayan advised Brahma to do Tapa (austerity and penance), and rewarded him with a boon.

Pleased by Brahma's Tapa, Narayan asked him to seek a boon and be rewarded with whatever he wished (8).'

Later on, in verse no. 23, Brahma asked Lord Narayan, i.e. Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, how he (Vishnu) became the Lord with four arms, and how the creation emerged from him. This has been answered by Vishnu in verse no. 24, which in essence is another fascinating take on the Genesis of Creation.

23. Brahma asked, 'Oh Lord! Please tell me how did you become four in form though you are always one and non-dual?

Similarly, how did the monosyllabic word OM got divided into four parts—A, U, M and the Ardha Matra?' (23).

24. [This verse describes the genesis of creation as narrated by Lord Narayan or Lord Vishnu himself.]

Lord Narayan replied, 'Prior to the coming into being of this creation, there was only one Brahm who prevailed everywhere. In the primary stages of creation, the primary Nature known as Mool Prakriti came into existence from this Brahm. This Prakriti was 'Abyakta', i.e. it was invisible and indefinable. Since this Prakriti emerged from the Akshar (imperishable, that which does not decay) Brahm, it too had the same characteristic feature of being Akshar.

From this Avyakta Prakriti was created Mahattatva (the Great Tattva or the primary element).

From the Mahatattva was created the Ahankar (pride and ego) which was a combination of the three Gunas known as Sata (the best quality), Raja (the medium quality) and Tama (the lowest and meanest quality).

From Ahankar (dominated by the Tamas Guna) were created the five Tanmatras or senses of perception (such as smelling, tasting, hearing, feeling and seeing).

From these were produced the five Maha-Bhuts or the five elements which would act as the building blocks of the rest of the creation.

[These five Maha-Bhuts were the 'sky' which was produced from the perception of hearing because sound needed space to travel and heard at a distance, the 'air' which was produced from the perception of feeling as is evident from the fact that we can 'feel' the breeze blowing against our faces inspite of it being invisible, the 'fire' which was produced from the perception of seeing because fire gave light that enabled to the creature to see, the 'water' which was produced from the perception of taste as is evident from the fact that we can taste anything only when its chemicals are dissolved in the water content of the saliva in the mouth, and the 'earth' which was produced from the perception of smell as is proved by the fact that one smells anything on the surface of the earth, and there is no smell in outer space. Refer section 1, Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 20 for a different take on this stanza.]

{Though not mentioned here expressly but it would be however relevant to point out that out of the Ahankar that was dominated by the Sata Guna was created the patron Gods of the five physical organs of perception, and from the Ahankar dominated by the Raja Guna was created the five organs of perception in the body, such as the ear that hears, the skin that feels, the eye that sees, the tongue that tastes, and the nose that smells.

As has been stated above, the actual senses of perception, such as sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch, relate to the gross world of material objects, and are created by and related to the Tama Guna. This is because this Tama Guna has the propensity to tie the creature to delusions and lowly things of the world, things that lack the sublimity and subtlety of the Atma. When the Atma is overwhelmed by the Tama Guna it begins to seek the world through these perceptions. The Atma sees beautiful sights and gets enamoured by them, it hears pleasant sounds and wants to hear them again and again, it tastes delicious things and wishes to roll it in the tongue to derive more physical pleasure from them, it smells pleasant smells and wishes to repeat the pleasant experience, and it feels things that arouse passions in it and then begins to long for their proximity. And when the all-powerful Atma manages to use the body to achieve success in these endeavours it becomes filled with 'Ahankar', i.e. it feels pride at its acquisition and

becomes haughty and arrogant. The Atma thus gets entangled in the web of Maya or ignorance and delusions. It loses its primary form of being unattached and neutral, and rather becomes excessively possessive and obsessive. This state of affairs corresponds to the Jagrat or the waking state of existence of consciousness.

But when the Atma is tired of its wanderings and finds that it is never satisfied, it retires to sleep which is called the Swapna or the dreaming state of existence of consciousness. This means that the Atma withdraws its self from the external world reached and perceived by the five organs of perception, and goes to a world which is subtle and not as gross as the physical world. This is the world of dreams, and here the only part of the body that plays an active role is the subtle body known as the mind-intellect complex and its sub-conscious part. The latter helps the Atma to imagine things that were experienced during the waking state but were beyond the reach of the physical limitations of the body.

For instance, if a poor man yearns for the comfort of a palace he can't do so while awake, but surely his mind would allow him to live in a palace when he dreams. When his wishes are fulfilled, the creature feels contented and happy. But the unfortunate aspect of this whole scenario is that the creature has to finally wake up from his dreams to face the harsh realities of the world. So the Atma keeps on oscillating between the Jagrat and the Swapna states.

A time comes when the Atma discovers to its amazement that there is a state when eternal peace can be found, the state where even the tussle between the acceptable and the unacceptable does not exist. This is the Sushupta state of deep sleep. The Atma finds real peace and bliss here. But again, for an ordinary man, this state is also transient as the Atma reverses its states to the earlier two states.

Then it begins to search for a state where peace and tranquility can be made perpetual—and it is then that the creature discovers the fourth state known as Turiya or the post-Sushupta state. When this state is further transcended, one reaches the higher echelons of super-consciousness that is called Turiya-teet.

In brief we deduce that a wise and enlightened man is one who knows what true peace is, and what the spiritual Truth of the Atma is that is absolute and irrefutable.}

In this way, the supreme Brahm, which is primarily Akshar (imperishable and eternal) and Avyakta (invisible and attribute-less) becomes covered or surrounded by so many layers of qualities, attributes, features and characters that it appears to be quite the opposite of what it is supposed to be.

[Brahm has not only created everything but also pervades each pore of each unit of this creation; there is nothing in this creation that is not Brahm. Hence, since even the gross and perishable aspects of this creation where the grosser of the five elements dominate, for instance the body of the creature, is a manifestation of Brahm, it gives the illusion that Brahm is gross and perishable. Another instance is of the negative dimensions of creation such as the quality of Ahankar (ego and pride) dominated by the Tama Guna. Brahm is said to be without any of the attributes associated with this creation; Brahm is an immaculate entity. So to say that Brahm has Ahankar, which is a negative quality, would be an absurd proposition when applied for Brahm, but the fact remains that Ahankar is as much a part and parcel of creation as the other positive qualities. Since this creation is a composite manifestation of Brahm, it follows that if this creation has positive virtues as well as negative virtues, then Brahm must also have them.

This is because the product cannot have any quality that is not present in the ingredients that are used to create or make it.

In brief, it must be remembered that this creation is a composite of the good and the bad, and this was done by the supreme Creator to maintain a fine balance of power and qualities. He allowed the creation to take its own course with the help of the creative and the substance ability of the Raja Guna, and ensured that it followed a right path with the powers of the Sata Guna. But as the creation went on rolling forward, decadence and wear and tear set in. What was initially immaculate clean and divine began to beset with problems (just like any modern machinery that works absolutely fine for a few years than creates a headache for the owner). It was then the Lord employed the Tama Guna to wind up the canvas so that he can clean up the slate and start afresh. If he had not stepped in, the negative qualities would have suffocated the life out of goodness in this creation, a proposition that the Lord did not like because he had a moral responsibility to uphold the good qualities. Even as any father would not wish his son to go out of hand to give the family a bad name, the Supreme Being stepped in and brought to conclusion the corrupt creation when it began to become a Frankenstein Monster. Therefore, any further growth of the negative qualities brings about an implosion of the creation and its automatic end.

The result is that the true form of the supreme transcendental Brahm remains hidden from view. It can be sighted or realised only when a person becomes enlightened and understands that the Atma that drives this creation while remaining hidden from view is the truthful form of Brahm as it possesses all the eclectic qualities known to be characteristics of Brahm, while the rest of the world is the creation that is simply a grosser manifestation of this Atma.

And this understanding can come with inculcating noble virtues that pave the ground for acquisition of eclectic wisdom and knowledge of the 'Truth'. This is because if the moral and spiritual ground is not conducive to let the seed of Truth sprout then it would die an untimely death.

It is here that the different scriptures come in handy as they not only show the correct path but also advise the aspirant what to do to reach his goal. They act as teachers and guides. So, if one follows the line shown by the scriptures without questioning their integrity and authenticity, it is sure that he would easily reach his spiritual goal of finding Mukti or Moksha—which means liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.] (24).

26. Balraam, the elder brother of Krishna and the son of Rohini, represents the letter 'A' of the ethereal word OM representing Brahm. He corresponds to the Jagrat (waking) state of consciousness, and is therefore known as the Vishwa.

Pradumna corresponds to the Swapna (dreaming) state of consciousness, and is therefore known as the Taijas. He symbolizes the letter 'U' of the ethereal word OM representing Brahm.

Anriuddha corresponds to the Sushupta (deep sleep) state of consciousness, and is therefore known as the Pragyā. He symbolizes the letter 'M' of the ethereal word OM representing Brahm.

And finally, Krishna, in whom the entire creation has its foundation and origin, corresponds to the Turiya (transcendental) state of consciousness, and is therefore known as the Pranav. He symbolizes the Ardha Matra of the ethereal word OM representing

Brahm. He represents the cosmic Naad (sound) that represents the presence of the cosmic Consciousness in this creation.

The other three forms are deemed to be included in this fourth form. Rukmini, who represents the dynamism of Brahm revealed in her form, is therefore an inseparable part of Krishna just as the Mool Prakriti from which the rest of creation has come into being is an inseparable part of Brahm (26).

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6. (h) The Tripura Tapini Upanishad:--

(Canto 1, verse no. 3)

Verse no. 3 = This verse sort of summarises the essence of the entire process of creation when it says that ‘The entire creation—consisting of the various Lokas (worlds), the Vedas, the Shastras (ancient scriptures), the Purans (mythological histories), the Dharma Shastras (codes of conduct; jurisprudence), the Chikitsa Shastra (the science of herbal medicine) and Jyotish (astrology)—has come into being as a union of Shiva and Shakti (i.e. the Supreme Brahm and his dynamic powers of creation known as Shakti).’

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6. (i) The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad:--

(Cantos 2-3)

Canto 2

1. The Lord (i.e. Sri Ram to whom this Upanishad is dedicated) is ‘self born’ or ‘self revealed’—i.e. the Lord is ‘Swaayambhu’. He does not require any external medium or cause to reveal himself in a visible form; he has no one from whom he is born. This is because he is eternal and without an end, so there is no question of his taking a new birth, as he is always present, and had never died. It is only that he makes himself physically visible that creates an illusion of the Lord taking a birth or coming into being, and his vanishing from sight when he so wishes or when his job in the visible form is done that he is regarded as leaving this world for his heavenly abode. In fact, the Lord is uniform, universal, constant, immutable, imperishable, omnipresent and eternal, not needing to go anywhere and not needing to come from anywhere. [He reveals himself without any cause whatsoever, or waiting for any reason to do so, for he does it out of his own free will whenever he deems it fit, necessary and proper.]

The Lord is an embodiment and an eternal fount of 'light' as he is a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness that is eternally self-illuminated. Hence, the Lord does not require any other source of light to illuminate him or make his presence known. That is why he is honoured by the epithet 'Jyotirmaya'—i.e. an entity that is 'lighted' and 'illuminated'.

The Lord is without an end or beginning; he is eternal and infinite; he has no measurable dimensions and attributes—i.e. he is 'Anant'. [Even though he appears to have a defined form as a human being, but essentially he is un-definable, unqualified, attribute-less and immeasurable, as well as is beyond the limiting factors of time, space and matter.]

In fact, he shines from his own self-generated light or illumination; he makes his presence evident by itself, requiring no other proofs to establish his presence, truthfulness, authenticity and veracity—i.e. the Lord is 'Swamev Bhaasate'. [His form is eternally illuminated and radiant, symbolizing enlightenment, wisdom, erudition and pure consciousness. He is like the self-evident and self-illuminated Sun in the sky which does not need any proof to establish its presence or anything else to keep it illuminated.]

He pervades throughout this living creation or world in the form of Consciousness; it is he in the form of 'pure consciousness' that resides in all Jivas (living beings) in this creation. It is he who has established this creation and keeps it established; it is he who supports this creation and the life in it (1).

2. The Lord himself is the one who is the cause of the creation coming into existence; he is the one who sustains and protects it; he is the one who finally concludes it. Towards this end, he willingly utilises the three basic qualities called the Gunas that act as catalysts to give effect to the Lord's wishes. These three Gunas help to bring about a particular change in creation, and modify the existing equilibrium in accordance with the wishes of the Lord.

These three Gunas are the following—Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. The dominance of the first quality called Sata Guna results in the emergence or retrieval of this present creation from the darkness that had prevailed after the previous phase of creation was annihilated. The dominance of the second quality called Raja Guna is responsible for the growth, the development, the sustenance and protection of creation that has come into existence. And finally, the third quality of Tama Guna brings about the conclusion of the existing creation.

Just like a huge banyan tree is secretly and imperceptibly present in its seed, only to emerge when the situation is conducive for its birth, this entire creation is secretly present in the supreme Lord and waiting for the right conditions that would cause it to emerge into a vibrant world. [And this 'right condition' is created when the Sata Guna becomes a dominant factor.]¹ (2).

[Note—¹It ought to be noted here that all these three Gunas are always present in this world, but in varying degrees. Under normal conditions equilibrium is maintained, but when certain Guna becomes more active or dominant this equilibrium is disturbed, and this result in a change becoming possible. The three Gunas play the role of a catalyst in effecting this change. Even as a computer can only function on the basis of its configuration and soft-wares installed into it, the creature was conditioned to act according to the ratio of these three Gunas built into his thought texture and personality

traits. In the present case, when the creation was harboured in the bosom of the supreme Brahm, a quiet balance was in place. When the Lord decided to see the creation come into existence once again after a long hibernation period after its conclusion at the end of the last phase of creation, his mere wish ignited the Sata Guna to become active and charged, and this stirred up the cosmic ocean of quietude which resulted in the first ripples of creation. This has been envisioned by ancient sages and seers as the stirring of the primordial cosmic ether or the cosmic gel that created subtle waves of energy that coalesced with one another and overlapped each other to become energized and gather strength. This produced the primordial sound that has been conceptualized in the form of the Mantra OM. And from this initial whirring and humming came into being the rest of the elements as the primordial cosmic gel began to show signs of losing its homogeneity and becoming more and more heterogeneous.

As the cosmic cauldron began to cool down and the various constituent layers of creation began taking shape, the Sata Guna, being the best and the most sublime of the three Gunas, floated to the surface like butter does in milk. The Tama Guna, being the grossest of the three Gunas, was the heaviest, the meanest and the densest, and therefore it settled at the bottom. Meanwhile, the Raja Guna, being of an intermediary character, occupied the place between the two. There was no fine and well-defined demarcation line between them, and the demarcation was more of being relative in nature. Hence, there were areas where the three intermingled equally, while at others one Guna dominated over the other two.

The Tama Guna, being crude, acidic and corrosive by nature, eroded the part of the creation where it dominated, explaining why the creation ends when this particular Guna becomes dominant. This also explains why the creature in whom the Tama Guna is a ruling character soon lands in grave spiritual trouble. But since the Sata Guna has a natural quality to look up and regenerate, this creation re-emerges from its ruins when the Sata Guna takes over the Tama Guna in a new phase of creation. The Raja Guna helps the nascent creation expand and develop to its full potentials under its patronage. It provides the necessary warmth, energy, stamina and dynamism necessary for growth and development. When the peak is reached, then like the sine wave the downward slide begins, reaches the bottom, and then picks up momentum once again to resurface as a new creation. This is briefly how the cycle continues and the wave of life oscillates infinitely.

The entire process of creation that followed has been explained in various Upanishads in varying languages, but basically all of them assert that Brahm had utilized these three Gunas to effect a change in the prevailing situation as and when the Lord deemed it fit and proper to do so.

The three qualities mentioned above are as follows:-

(i) Sata Guna—it is the most superior of the three qualities. It represents creative thoughts, positive attitude, characteristics of service, humility, devotion, nobility, virtuousness, righteousness, auspiciousness etc. That is why Brahma the creator was wise and created the primary scriptures called the Vedas, and all the inhabitants of this world were law-abiding citizens who respected the laws of Nature and paid homage to the forces of Nature personified as various Gods. Sins and vices were non-existent. But as the supreme Brahm had wished that ‘change be the norm rather than the exception’ in his creation, because if there was no change the world would stagnate and become stale, its development and growth would stop, and then the very purpose of effecting some change in the quietude of the cosmos that prevailed after its last phase was annihilated would be defeated. So Brahm ensured that ‘change’ would be automatically built into the creation he has initiated, and towards this end he made these three Gunas as fluid as possible. Even a slight stir is enough to disturb the balance and set in motion some change.

(ii) Raja Guna—it is the second quality producing worldly desires, passions, ambitions, stormy nature, expansionist tendencies, desire to obtain lordship and dominant role in creation etc. This Guna kept the creature engrossed in this world of material objects. The Lord built this Raja Guna into the texture of this creation and as an integral part of a creature's mental tendency and thought processes to ensure that he remains interested in keeping the wheel of creation turning on behalf of the supreme Creator known as Brahm.

(iii) Tama Guna—it is the third and the most mean and base of the three qualities that represent such negative traits as sins, vices, misdeeds, anger, wrath, vengeance, deceit, conceit, recklessness, jealousy, hatred etc. Obviously, when such traits are dominant in any society, it becomes degenerate and decays to an end rapidly. To say that Brahm brings about the conclusion of creation by taking the help of Tama Guna is a metaphoric way of saying that when these negative factors become the norm rather than the exception in any society, it is bound to fail, disintegrate and wither away on its own. Brahm brings about the conclusion by unleashing the Tama Guna in the world.]

3. Similarly, the whole animate as well as the inanimate world is intrinsically and latently present in the Beej Mantra or the seed/root Mantra of Lord Ram. This Beej Mantra is 'Raam/Raan(g)'. The very fact that it is called a 'Beej' clearly indicates that it is the 'seed' from which the rest of the creation has emerged (just like the case of the huge banyan tree emerging from its seed as cited in verse no. 2 of this Canto above). [Refer also to Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 9 which deals with the same subject and in almost an identical language.]

All the three aspects of creation (i.e. origin, sustenance, and conclusion) are represented in the form of the three deities of the Trinity (as Brahma who is responsible for creation, as Vishnu who is responsible for sustenance and protection, and as Shiva who is responsible for conclusion).

Since the supreme Lord (in this case Lord Ram who is personified Brahm, the Supreme Being) is the foundation of this creation, since he is the one who is the supreme creator, sustainer and protector, as well as the concluder (as noted in verse no. 2), it follows that all these three aspects of creation and their representative deities are dependent upon the Lord for their existence and importance.

Again, since the Lord uses his cosmic dynamic powers to bring about change and give effect to his wishes of creating, sustaining and concluding this creation, it follows that the female counter-parts of these three deities (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) are in effect the 'Shakti', or the dynamic energy as well as the stupendous cosmic power, authority, ability and strength of the supreme Lord (Ram or Brahm) in a personified form.

Since the letter 'Ra' (pronounced as in *run*) of the Sanskrit language is the fundamental letter of the Beej Mantra of the Lord, which is 'Raam/Raan(g)',¹ and which is regarded as the 'seed' ('Beej') from which the rest of the creation has emerged (as explained above), it follows that all the three aspects of creation represented by these Gods and Goddesses rest upon or have their foundation upon this basic letter of the Lord's name¹.

Those who are wise, erudite, enlightened and Brahm-realised are aware of this fact (3).

[Note—¹The word 'Ram' or 'Raam' ('Ra/Raa' as in *rather* or *ration*, and 'M' as in *mum* or *come*) consists of four distinct sounds of the Sanskrit language—the consonant 'Ra'

(as in *run*, *rung*), the long vowel sound ‘Aa’ which is the second vowel (as in *rather*, *arm* or *father*), the basic vowel ‘A’ which is the primary sound in any language (as in *a* table; *amongst*) and the consonant ‘Ma’ (sounded as in *mum* or *come*).

Lord Ram is represented by the basic letter ‘Ra’ of the word ‘Ram’ without which it would not have any existence. This is symbolic of the fact that without the Lord, the creation would not have any existence. Now, since Lord Ram is the supreme Creator, it follows that the letter ‘Ra’ also stands for Brahma, the creator of the visible world. With the same analogy, the second letter ‘Aa’ of the word Ram represents the sustainer Vishnu because Lord Ram is also the universal sustainer and protector of creation. And finally, since Lord Ram is the ultimate destination of the entire creation, he also represents Shiva, the concluder. Therefore, the last letter ‘Ma’ of the word Ram stands for Lord Shiva.

The initiation of the sound, the propagation of the sound, and the winding up of the sound, are represented by the three Trinity Gods known as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, while the loop which ties them together into one single and wholesome composite mass, or in other words, which completes the circle, is the supreme Brahm called Ram. This concept has been explained in Canto 3 of Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad.]

Canto 3

1. Lord Ram and his divine consort Sita are worshipped through this Beej Mantra of the Lord (i.e. the Beej Mantra ‘Raam/Raan(g)’ stands for Lord Ram as well as for Sita). Or in other words, Lord Ram stands for the Viraat Purush or Vishnu, and Sita represents Prakriti or Mother Nature.

[This is because Lord Ram stands for the supreme Brahm, while Sita stands for the Shakti or the dynamic aspect of the cosmic energy and the supreme inviolable powers of Brahm. Even as a king and his powers are inseparable from one another, Brahm and its Shakti are also inseparable and indistinguishable from one another. Brahm and Shakti are in-alienable, and therefore if Brahm reveals himself as Ram, his Shakti accompanies the Lord as Sita. As creation unfolded, Brahm came to be known as the ‘Viraat Purush’ or the primordial Male aspect of creation who provided the primary spark of life into the primordial cosmic gel to initiate the changes that would ultimately lead to the rolling forward of the wheel of creation. This form of Brahm was called ‘Viraat’ because of its colossus size and cosmic contours, and ‘Purush’ because it provided the first spark—or ‘sperm’—of life. Brahm’s dynamism and cosmic energy known as Shakti that brought about this change was called ‘Prakriti’ or Nature because it gave effect to the desire of Brahm to create and then sustain this creation in a perpetual manner by first conceiving and then harbouring and providing nourishment to the embryonic creation in its initial stages, and its subsequent development and growth. It was called ‘Nature’ because of two reasons—one, the primary Gunas, such as the Sata, Raja and Tama, that were used by the supreme Creator to inject certain qualities to the cosmic embryo determined the ‘nature’ of the off-spring that was eventually produced from it, and two, once the process of creation was set in motion, it took its own ‘natural course’ of evolution and development based on the laws of ‘Nature’ that ‘naturally’ came into force. All these factors were responsible for calling the primary form of creation as Prakriti or ‘Nature’.]

It is from them (Ram as the 'Purush' or the primordial Male, and Sita as the 'Prakriti' or primary Nature) that the fourteen Bhuvans¹ (or the fourteen symbolic areas of the world) came into being.

It is from this cosmic form of the Lord that these Bhuvans (i.e. the entire gamut of creation) have come into being, it is this Lord that sustains them and protects them, and it is in this cosmic Lord that all of them would finally collapse into and vanish.

[It is like the case of the waves in the huge ocean rising from its surface, developing and growing into huge and formidable walls of water that can often upturn ships and wipe out entire coastal villages when they lash ashore. When these waves have spent their force and energy, they collapse back into the ocean to take rest for some time only to re-emerge with renewed vigour when the time comes for the formation of a new train of high-rise waves. But this cycle of waves does not affect or alter the primary form or nature of the ocean even a tiny bit. Another fine example would be that of the huge banyan tree emerging from a seed, growing into a huge structure, living its life to the full and dying to re-emerge from a seed once again.]

Lord Ram had assumed the form of a human being out of his own maverick power of creating delusions, called the power of 'Maya'.

[This Maya is also a form of Shakti of Brahm, being very powerful and dynamic in its force and effect. This form of Shakti of the Lord is called 'Maya Shakti'. This form of dynamism of Brahm helps the latter to create delusions in this creation, which in turn keeps the creature trapped in the cycle of birth and death as it prevents him from realizing or becoming aware of the 'truth'. Brahm has employed this Maya Shakti to ensure that the wheel of creation rolled by him keep on rolling infinitely till the time the Lord decides to stop it. When he thus decides, he withdraws his Maya Shakti, and all delusions vanish.] (1).

[Note—¹(a) The name of the fourteen Bhuvans according to Padma Puran are— 7 upper worlds- (i) Bhu, (ii) Bhuvha, (iii) Swaha, (iv) Maha, (v) Janaha, (vi) Tapaha, (vii) Satyam; 7 nether worlds—(viii) Atal, (ix) Vital, (x) Satal, (xi) Rasatal, (xii) Talatal, (xiii) Mahatal, (xiv) Patal.

(b) In the beginning there was nothing to start with except the primordial cosmic gel. Then the Lord used his magical skills and stupendous powers to mould the entire creation from this jelly. The most evident example of this process is the formation of the complex human body form the single egg present in the mother and its fertilization by the male sperm resulting in an entity known as a man who is a microcosm of the entire creation. He is an image of the creation because the Lord had created man in his own image, and the entire creation is deemed to be a revelation of the supreme Lord who pervades throughout it uniformly. 'In his own image' is a figure of speech to emphasize the fact that whatever exists in the creation is one or the other form of the Lord, and there is nothing which is not a form of the Lord. Therefore, it would be safe to say that the maverick cosmic creator had no precedent to copy from; he had to go it alone.

The fact that the supreme Brahm created a man in his own image, or that Brahm revealed himself as a human being is endorsed by the Aiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda tradition as well as the first chapter on the genesis of creation in the Holy Bible, Old Testament.]

2. 'We bow and pay our respects to the supreme Lord Ram (who is none else but Brahm manifested) who lives in this world and uniformly pervades in it as its 'Atma' and its

‘Pran’—i.e. as the creation’s soul and its life, as its essence, as its fundamental basis and its core.

[This is the reason why Brahm is called a ‘Purush’—it is because Brahm lives inside every individual creature as his Atma or consciousness, and as his Pran or vital life factors such as his vital winds. In other words, the body of the creature is the divine abode where this Brahm lives. In fact, the word ‘Purush’ means one who lives inside a ‘Pur’ or a city or a dwelling.]¹.

The spiritual aspirant should think of Lord Ram as the Supreme Being called Brahm himself personified. Brahm is the primary and primordial cosmic Consciousness that prevailed even before this creation came into being or was even conceptualized. This form of the Lord (Ram) transcends even the three Gunas (Sata, Raja and Tama) that helped to determine the nature and texture of the would-be creation. It is this form of the Divinity that is worthy of adoration and paying respects to, and the worshipper should bow his head to it.

He should endeavour to establish oneness between his own ‘self’, i.e. his own Atma, and this supreme Lord, i.e. the supreme Atma. This is called ‘self-realisation’ and attainment of Brahm-hood. When this is achieved, the spiritual aspirant exclaims in ecstasy of having discovered the greatest truth of creation as well as of himself—he says ‘I am Lord Ram who is Brahm’; or ‘There is no difference between me and Ram’. This is the highest level of spiritual attainment and marks the pinnacle of enlightenment and realisation² (2).

[Note—¹Having created this world, the Supreme Lord entered it in the form of the Atma, the pure consciousness. This Atma is the soul, the essence of this creation, for if the core is removed the outer structure would collapse as it would have nothing to support it, or nothing to stand on. In other words, the genes of the supreme Father were transferred to his off spring, the creature at the micro level and the creation at the macro level, in the form of ‘Consciousness’, because Brahm is nothing but cosmic Consciousness. Again, since Brahm is the ultimate and absolute Truth of creation, it follows that this Atma representing the supreme Lord is also the Truth in this whole setup. This Atma is the ‘true self’ of the creature because it represents the supreme Lord, Brahm or Ram, and just like the supreme Lord had allowed himself to be surrounded by Maya (delusions) willingly, and thereby got sucked in the vortex of numerous duties pertaining to his own creation—such as its sustenance, protection, nourishment and regulation etc.—a man also gets sucked in this world if he allows his Atma to be surrounded by delusions and ignorance of its exalted heritage.

Another important component of this creation that infuses ‘life’ in it is the ‘Pran’. The word ‘Pran’ means ‘life that is marked by conscious awareness and activity’. In practical terms, both the terms ‘Atma’ and ‘Pran’ co-exist because both are like the two sides of the same coin.

While the word ‘Atma’ means the soul and the consciousness, the word ‘Pran’ means the vital winds that govern the vital signs of life in the gross body and its functioning. In practice, both are synonymous with each other. This is because a creature is alive only as long as his body as the Atma as well as the Pran in it. If one leaves the body, the other becomes automatically defunct.

The importance and interdependence of the Atma and Pran on each other can be easily visualized. The Atma in the form of consciousness is said to have its residence in the heart of the creature. It is common knowledge that life remains in the creature and his organs are kept conscious only as long as the heart beats and supplies blood to the

different organs of the body. But say how can the heart beat and keep the creature alive if the Pran or the vital winds decide to call it quits and paralyse the rest of the body, preventing the organs to perform their basic functions, such as the blood vessels to carry blood to the heart, and the tissues to produce energy by digesting food?

Similarly, the Pran, in the form of the vital airs or winds, controls all the signs of life in the creature, and keeps all the organs of the body, the external as well as the internal, alive and active. But say how can it do so if the heart stops beating?

The Lord has been conceptualized as a 'Purush'—literally meaning 'one who lives in a Pur, a city or palace'. Refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 explicitly as the cosmic all-pervading macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being, called the Viraat Purush, who had entered each and every body of all the creatures and had taken up his residence there. According to the Aiteriyo Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 3, the supreme Brahm created the vast universe and his image in the form of the Viraat Purush, and the Gods were created from this Viraat—Canto 1, verse no. 4.

When the mortal world consisting of the visible world was created, the human body was considered as the best image of the Viraat Purush, and thus all these Gods took up their residence in it—Canto 2, verse nos. 3-5. According to the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18, it was this Viraat Purush himself that entered the body of all the creatures of this creation.

The Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 9-10 clearly affirm that it is the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm, that resides in the body of all living beings as their Atma.

According to reverend Sankracharya's commentary on *Kathopanishad*, Canto 1, Valli 3, verse no. 11 and Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 12, the word Purush refers to that supreme entity which uniformly pervades in and completely fills everything that exists. It also refers to one who resides inside any place and completely owns that place. Therefore, this word Purush refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm who has taken up residence in the gross body of the creature as the Atma at the micro level of creation, and as the cosmic Atma known as the Parmatma at the macro level. This Brahm pervades throughout them in a uniform way even as the sky and the wind element occupy all available space in the creation. That is also why sky is considered as a nearest analogy of Brahm because even the other all-pervading element, the wind/air, is present in it and not outside of it.

²This realisation is the culmination of one's spiritual exercises. It is the pinnacle of self-realisation and attainment of Brahm-hood.

The declaration that the spiritual makes in this verse finds resonance in the Mahavakyas or the great saying of the Vedas. Some of the Upanishads that describe these Mahavakyas are the following—

(i) Rig Veda—Atmabodha Upanishad.

(ii) Sam Veda—Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6, section 16, verse no. 3 (Tattwamasi).

(iii) Shukla Yajur Veda—Paingalo-panishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2-3, 8; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Brahman 2, section 2, verse no. 5; Brahman 2, section 4, verse no. 4; Brahman 3, section 1, verse no. 6; Brahman 3, section 2, verse no. 2; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 2, 10 (So-a-Ham), 30-31 (Tattwamasi).

(iv) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shukar Rahasayo-panishad, verse no. 22; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 16; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 32, 37; Avadhut Upanishad, verse no. 2.

(v) Atharva Veda—Atma Upanishad; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 7, verse no. 8 (Tattwamasi; Ayamaatma Brahm); Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5,

paragraph no. 15 ('So-a-Ham'); Canto 6, paragraph no. 22 ('Twam Brahmasmi'; 'Aham Brahmasmi'; 'Twamewaaham'; 'Ahamev Twam'); Canto 8, paragraph no. 5 ('Brahmaasmi' or I am Brahm; 'Ahamasmi' or Indeed it is I/me; 'Brahmahamasmi' or I am indeed Brahm; 'Yoahamasmi' or That is I/me; 'Brahmaamashmi' or Brahm is I/me; 'Ahamevaaham' or I am indeed I/me.); Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 13-14 (Tat Twam Asi—That Art Thou); Ram Uttar Tapaini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 9-10 (So-a-Ham); Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 8 (Brahmasmi—I am Brahm personified); Mahavakya Upanishad, verse nos. 6-8 ('Hans So-a-Ham'); verse no. 11 ('So-a-Hamarka'—that essence is me); Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 15 ('Tattwamasi'—i.e. that supreme essence or truth is you; the second Maha Vakya is 'Ayamatma'—i.e. that essence known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, is my own Atma, my own 'self'; the third Maha Vakya is 'Brahm Aham'—i.e. Brahm is me; the fourth Maha Vakya is 'Aham Brahmasmi'—i.e. I am Brahm).]

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6. (j) The Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad:--

(Canto 3, verse nos. 1-4)

[This Canto describes how the four letters of the ethereal Mantra OM had manifested themselves as the four brothers Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan. Then it goes on to assert that Sita, the consort of Lord Ram, is a manifestation of Mother Nature known as the primordial Prakriti. Intertwined in this discussion are metaphysical concepts regarding the four states of consciousness such as the Jagrat or waking, Swapna or dreaming, Sushupta or deep sleep, and Turiya or post deep sleep or the early stage of transcendental existence.]

1. The 1st syllable of the cosmic, divine, sublime and ethereal word OM is the Sanskrit alphabet 'A' (ॐ) corresponding to the English alphabet 'A' and pronounced as *a* pen, son. The son of Sumitra, i.e. Laxman¹ (the younger brother of Lord Ram), who enchants the entire world by his bewitching charm and pleasant demeanours, is a manifestation of this letter. In Vedant, he represents the Jagrat² or the 'waking state of consciousness' of the Atma (or the soul). In this state of existence, the Atma is aware of the external gross world at large, and therefore it is recognized as 'Vishwa'—literally meaning 'the world'. [Amongst the 4 chief names of Vishnu, he represents the name 'Sankarshan'.]

The 2nd syllable of OM is the Sanskrit alphabet 'Oo' (ॐ) corresponding to its English counterpart 'U'. Shatrughan³, who is known for his stupendous 'Tej', or his potentials, powers, dynamism and glory as the vanquisher of enemies, is a manifestation of this letter. In Vedantic terms, he represents the Swapna⁴ or the 'dream state of consciousness'. In this state of existence, the Atma is unaware of the external gross world at large, and is centered on the subtle world of the inner-self and the sub-conscious which is powerful and full of energy that more often than not remains hidden, dormant and concealed during the waking state. This state is therefore recognized as the

‘Taijasa’—literally meaning ‘energetic, vibrant, full of vigour and dynamism’ even in a subtle form. Another reason for it being called ‘Taijasa’ is that it can ‘dream and imagine’ things of stupendous varieties and dimensions which the creature cannot ever hope to see or conceive in his mind when he is awake. [Amongst the four chief names of Vishnu, he stands for ‘Pradumna’.] (1).

[Note—These four states have been described in a number of Upanishads—viz. (a) Shukla Yajur Veda—Trishikhi Brahman Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 149-150; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 2/1/16-20, 4/3/9-38; Subalo-panishad, Canto 4 full as well as Canto 9, verse no. 1-7; Paingalo-panishad, 2/11-16; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, 2/4-2/5; Turiyateet Upanishad. (b) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 59-64, 72; Canto 4, verse no. 11-20; Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1, 20-21; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 93/12-93/15; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 4; Shaarirak Upanishad, verse no. 14; Brahm/Amrit Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 11. (c) Atharva Veda tradition—Mandukya Upanishad, verse nos. 3-7; Atharvashikha Upanishad; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 4-7; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 1, 24-26; Canto 6, verse no. 3-4, Canto 8, verse nos. 9-16, 19-20; Ram Uttara Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-4 (in relation with Sri Ram and others), and verse nos. 5-8 (in relation with the Atma); Param Hans Upanishad, paragraph no. 6.

¹Refer note of verse no. 5 of this Canto 3 for an exposition on Laxman being equivalent to the Jagrat state.

²Briefly, the *Jagrat state* is the 1st stage or the waking of consciousness. During this state, a creature’s sense organs that constitute its gross body are active and they receive inputs from the physical material world outside which they in turn transfer to the mind which forms the creature’s subtle body. This mind then filters through the clutter of information, then either orders the organs of action to respond accordingly, or it consults its supervisor, the intellect, for advice. Meanwhile, the mind stores all the information in its data bank for future reference much like the record room of an office. The true self of the creature, the pure conscious Atma, is like the King in whose secretariat the mind and intellect work, and therefore the Atma is the final Authority which takes the final decision and is responsible for all the things done by each of these individual entities. Even as the King cannot absolve himself for the sins committed by his subjects during his rule or plead ignorance of whatever is happening in his kingdom though he is not directly involved in them or in the day to day routine work of the kingdom as he stays in his palace and cannot be practically expected to control each movement in his kingdom, but he is morally responsible for them and cannot deny this responsibility. Similarly, the Atma of the creature is responsible for each and every thing that the creature does though the Atma is limited to its palace-like residence in the heart of the creature. So, the otherwise immaculate Atma is accused of things that body or mind of the creature does because the Atma is at the helm of affairs.

During this Jagrat state, the Atma interacts with the outside world through the medium of the sense organs of the gross body (i.e. the physical body). The sense organs of perception of the body collect information from the external world and pass them over to the mind, which in turn processes them and passes necessary instructions to the organs of action on the one hand, and files data for future reference in its memory bank on the other hand. The mind would also refer to the intellect those things which are not routine in nature. It is the transcendental state of supreme enlightenment and self-realisation.

The Jagrat state is when the consciousness is aware of the external world of material objects, and this is made possible through the medium of the sense organs of perceptions

such as the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin which enables the creature to respectively see, hear, smell, taste and feel this world. The creature's responses are carried out with the help of the organs of action such as the hands which receive, the legs that take him to the desired place, the mouth that helps him to speak and eat, the excretory organs that helps it to eliminate waste from the body, and the genitals which helps him to recreate and enjoy the sensual pleasures of the world. These organs are located in the gross body, and since the world is experienced through them, the latter is also deemed to be gross. The coordination of all the perceptions and actions is done by the mind-intellect which is the subtle part of the body.

The first stage of Jagrat or waking state of consciousness has been beautifully described in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 20; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 16-19, 31, 34-35.

³Refer note of verse no. 6 of this Canto for an exposition on Shatrughan being equivalent to the Swapna state.

⁴The *Swapna* state—Next comes the state in which a person sleeps, and in metaphysical terms it is called *Supta*. This is the sleeping state of consciousness. Here, the creature is alive because it's Pran or the vital winds move around and remain active in its different Naadis (tubular ducts in the body such as the nerves which number seventy thousand).

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 2 very precisely describes what sleep is.

Swapna or dreaming state is the 2nd state of consciousness when the latter has withdrawn its self from being actively involved in the outside world through the medium of the sense organs of perception and action. But the mind does not sleep and remains active as before, though this activity is at the subtle level of the sub-conscious. Here, the consciousness remains active through the medium of the vital winds, called the various Prans present inside the body, and moves in the different Naadis (tubular ducts in the body, such as the nerves and veins etc.) which keep the mind working. Refer Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingalo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 12, and Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 18; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 20; Krishna Yajur Veda's Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 58-60; Rig Veda's Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 19.

This Pran is deemed to be synonymous with the life factors and consciousness in the body as well as with the latent fire element present inside the body which gives the energy, strength and vitality to the body to live and remain active. If it were not for the fire element (Tej) and the wind element (Pran), the consciousness (Atma, the 'self') would have found it difficult to live in the body. In fact, the Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 3 clearly states that the Pran in its manifestation as Agni or fire.

Since no external stimuli is being received from the outside world, the mind begins to replay what is stored in its memory bank and uses its stupendous abilities to imagine and recreate situations and circumstances in an imaginary world of dreams. Since the Atma living in the causal body depends upon the mind living in the subtle body to feel or sense anything pertaining to this world, for all practical purposes therefore the Atma begins to live in this new world of dreams conjured up by the mind and gets as involved in it as it was during the waking state. Since the mind is active here, the man remembers some of his dreams even when he wakes up. So as far as the Atma is concerned, the two states of waking and dreaming mean the same—the world exists for it in both these two states.]

2. The 3rd syllable 'Ma' (म) of the cosmic, divine, sublime and ethereal word OM corresponds to the English letter 'M'. It has manifested itself as Bharat¹ who was most realised, enlightened, erudite and wise. According to Vedant, he represents the 3rd stage of existence of consciousness, called the 'Sushupta'² state which is the 'deep sleep state of consciousness'. In this state of existence, the Atma is unaware of both the external world at large as well as the subtle world that exists in a person's dreams. In other words, the Atma is left undisturbed and free to be centered around its own truthful self, which is enlightened and wise, hence recognized as 'Pragya'—literally meaning 'wise, awakened, enlightened, aware, erudite and sagacious'. [He represents the 3rd name 'Anirudha' of Vishnu.]

The 4th half-syllable added as a tail end of the 2nd letter 'U' is called the 'Ardha Maatra'. This represents Sri Ram³ who is an embodiment of eternal bliss, peace and tranquility that is associated with Brahm-realisation, as well as the one who is most learned and highly expert in the scriptures. He symbolises the 4th state of consciousness called 'Turiya'⁴ which is marked by supreme and eternal bliss, or the high quality of bliss of self-realisation that is called 'Brahmaanand' attained during the last stage of 'Samadhi' by Yogis (ascetics). [Sri Ram represents the 4th name 'Vasudeo' of Vishnu. Samadhi is a trance-like state of bliss and ecstasy that is obtained when one reaches certain high level of super consciousness when all grossness is eliminated and only the sublime survives.] (2).

[Note—¹Refer note of verse no. 7 of this Canto for an exposition on Bharat being equivalent to Sushupta state.

²The *Sushupta* or deep sleep state of consciousness—Beyond the second state of existence of consciousness is the third eclectic state called the *Sushupta* or deep sleep state. This has been elaborately dealt with in the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 19; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 14-15, 19, 21-30. During this stage the creature does not dream.

The *Sushupta* or the deep sleep state of consciousness is the 3rd state in which the mind has also become defunct, and the Atma has withdrawn itself into the exclusive domain of the causal body and lives in seclusion, disconnected with the external world because of the non-involvement of either the gross body or the subtle body. Here it is surrounded by the space of the subtle sky around the heart, called the Hridya Akash. During this state of existence, the vital winds, called the Pran or 'life' of the creature, keep on moving in the different Naadis (various ducts such as nerves and veins etc.) as during the dreaming state so as to keep the body alive as is evident from the fact that all the subtle and imperceptible functions of the inner organs of the body such as the liver, kidneys, heart, pancreas, digestive organs, lungs etc. continue uninterrupted as before, because if they cease to function the body would die. It is the mind now that has gone in a defunct state. But this phase is temporary and shows the true nature and fundamental characteristic of the Atma, which is blissful and peaceful, contented and fulfilled, not feeling restless and perplexed in any manner whatsoever because it is now not being disturbed by the mind's constant nagging. That is why a sound asleep man does not want anything, he does not feel anything, he is not worried about anything, he is not concerned about anything, and he does not remember anything. That is also why one feels very relaxed and refreshed after even a short deep sleep when the mind and the body both find their rest.

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 4, verse no. 6 describes in clear terms why a creature stops dreaming.

³Refer note of verse no. 8 of this Canto for an exposition on Ram being equivalent to the Turiya state.

⁴The *Turiya* state—Then comes the 4th state of existence of the Atma, and it is known as *Turiya* state. This state is reached when the third state becomes a perpetual phenomenon instead of being only a temporary phase. Once this state of Turiya is reached, then even though the man might wake up from sleep and appear to be going about his normal duties in a routine manner in this world, his pure consciousness remains aloof and distanced from the sense organs of perception and actions as well as from the mind. This is the ‘transcendental state’ of existence of consciousness, and it goes beyond the third state of Sushupta or deep sleep state of consciousness. Here the spiritual aspirant lives in a state of perpetual Samadhi. That is, he remains in a constant state of blissfulness and meditation though he lives in this physical world and goes about his normal affairs like an ordinary man.

During this 4th state called ‘Turiya’, the Atma acquires all the characters of the earlier three stages, viz. the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleeping states in their individual form as well as in a combined and composite way. In this state of spiritual existence, the consciousness exhibits all the traits of the earlier three states at the same time along with the unique traits which would obviously be a net result of the combined affect of all the individual traits that are so unique to each of the three earlier states of existence consciousness—viz. the waking state, the dreaming state, and the deep sleep state.

The 4th state of existence of the consciousness or Atma is also called the ‘Turiya Chaitanya state’. In this state, the creature exists in its purest form as the pure consciousness which is undiluted, uninterrupted and unpolluted by any impulses or inputs from the external world. This results in its pristine and immaculate form as ‘consciousness’ to shine through (much like the flame of the candle which shines with all its brightness and splendour once the tainted glass covering around it is removed). This consciousness is the true ‘self’ of the creature and its real identity.

Thus, it is the Atma or the pure consciousness as the true ‘self’ of the creature that is the witness of the existence of the other three states in which the creature lives. This ‘self’ or Atma is imperishable and without a birth or beginning. This is because the other three states continue to appear and disappear in a rhythmic cycle as the creature wakes up to face the world after his phase of sleep is over, only to go back to sleep again when it is exhausted, and wake up again refreshed and rejuvenated from sleep. But the fourth state is like the Sun in the sky which is steady and shines constantly upon the world and lights it up. This Sun is unaffected by anything happening in this world and to this world, and remains completely dispassionate and detached from anything mundane and terrestrial. Nights and days appear and disappear in a cyclic manner, but the Sun remains the same. During the night it is erroneously assumed that the Sun is no more, but as science has proved the Sun is there in the sky though it might not be visible to the creature during that period of time called the ‘night’ as it is shining on the outer side of the globe. The day is comparable to the waking state of consciousness, the moon-light night to the dreaming state of consciousness when a man is able to see this world but with a different light, while the dark night when nothing is visible is comparable to the deep sleep state of consciousness when nothing of the external world is visible.

The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, verse no. 64, describes what the practical implication of this Turiya state of consciousness is.

The Subalo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 9, verses 1-7 elaborately describes the fourth state of existence of the consciousness called the Turiya state. It says that the bliss and happiness, collectively called ‘Anand’, which is found in

the 4th state of existence of the consciousness called 'Turiya' when one experiences and witnesses the divine supreme transcendental Being (Brahm), also ends with Turiya. It is the 'final frontier', the ultimate goal that the soul strives to reach. So, when the fount of bliss (Anand) is reached in the Turiya state, nothing more is left to be achieved or acquired. As soon as a man abandons this supreme state of existence and wakes up into this mundane existential material world, he immediately loses that bliss which he was enjoying in the Turiya state.

The word Turiya means 'fourth quarter', and once this segment is reached after crossing the first three quarters, there is nothing beyond it and the complete cycle is achieved. There is accomplishment of all that has to be accomplished; there is the 'final coming home, full cycle' for the soul. Everything comes to a full stop.]

3. Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram, represents the cosmic Shakti of Brahm. This Shakti is a personified form of the cosmic dynamic energy, powers and authority of the Supreme Being by which he creates, sustains and concludes this entire creation along with all its inhabitants.

[That is why this Shakti had to accompany Brahm in the latter's manifestation as Ram so that the evil demonic elements exemplified by the demon king Ravana could be got rid of. This is because Brahm utilizes his cosmic Shakti or his dynamic powers of an astounding profundity to do anything. The Shakti carries out the orders of the Supreme Being and acts on his behalf. So, when Brahm decided to come down to earth to eliminate the evil, pervert and negative forces of creation which had become dominant and were creating insurmountable problems for the rest of the subjects of the vast realm of the Supreme Being, thereby stifling Dharma and all righteousness and auspiciousness, the Shakti accompanied the Lord to help him fulfill his objectives. It is just like the more practical example of a king or an emperor being accompanied by his army and generals when he goes to some part of his vast and extended kingdom or empire to restore the rule of law and overcome some savage enemy who had been tyrannizing, causing horrors and perpetrating cruelty on the helpless subjects of the king or emperor. The king or the emperor actually does nothing in physical sense, but it is the army and its generals as well as the ministers of the sovereign who actually do what is needed to be done on his behalf. Similarly, Shakti, in the form of Sita, accompanied Brahm when the latter decided to come down to earth as an incarnation in the form of Lord Ram.] (3).

4. That cosmic, divine, sublime and primordial energy (referred to in verse no. 3) is called Sita. She represents the 'Naad and Bindu' represented by the 'dot' and the 'crescent' (ॐ) respectively that is put on the sign of the ethereal Mantra OM (ॐ) representing the supreme Brahm or Pranav, and without which the word OM remains unadorned.

[This mark is like a crown of OM. Even as any king, who is the sovereign of his realm, acquires his powers because of the crown on his head, Brahm also acquires his stupendous dynamic powers and majestic potentials because of this divine cosmic energy called 'Shakti' that he possesses. It is this Shakti that has revealed itself in the body of Sita.]

Erudite and wise ones also recognize her (Sita) as the 'Mool Prakriti' because she is a manifestation of the essential, primordial, primary Nature which is a basic component of this creation. This 'Prakriti' as well as the 'Shakti' are inseparable from and an integral

part of the cosmic Authority known as the supreme Brahm. While Shakti is the dynamism of Brahm, Prakriti is the revelation of this Shakti at the cosmic level of creation.

When this Brahm assumed a visible form as Lord Ram, it is natural that the inseparable aspects of Brahm, i.e. Prakriti and Shakti, would also reveal themselves simultaneously. Hence, Sita is invariably and unequivocally associated with Lord Ram even as Shakti and Prakriti are associated with Brahm. It is this Brahm who is personified in the form of Lord Ram, and it is Shakti that is personified in the form of Sita (4).

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6. (k) The Atharva-shikha Upanishad:--

(Kandika 1)

The Kandika no. 1 of this Upanishad is primarily dedicated to expounding upon the evolution of creation from the four components of the divine word OM which is regarded as the subtlest form of the revelation of the Supreme Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness. OM is a 'sound representative of Brahm'. The sound is the first evidence of life in the cosmos, and this cosmic sound, which the ancient sages and seers could hear during their meditative states of mind, fills the entire space of the universe. Sound also denotes some subtle movement in the cosmic ether, as these movements produced friction which in turn produced the sound. The sound waves coalesced with each other, multiplying in energy that finally provided the vital spark necessary to kick-start the chain reaction that ultimately produced the creation we witness today.

Since a perfectly dead entity does not produce any movement or sound, the very presence of the cosmic reverberation was clear evidence that some entity was there which was 'conscious and breathing'. It was named Brahm.

Now, let us see what this Upanishad has to say on the subject—

1. Once, sages Pippalaad, Angiras and Sanatkumar approached the great sage Atharvan and asked—'Oh Lord! Which is the highest form of meditation and contemplation that you have preached? What does it consist of, and what are its four steps? Who is the meditator? What is the object of this meditation or the reward of such meditation?'

Sage Atharvan replied—'Well, the ethereal word OM representing Pranav or the transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being, is always present. It was present before even the Vedas symbolising knowledge came into being. It is this OM that should be meditated upon.

[Since OM represents Brahm, the supreme Creator and the progenitor of all knowledge represented by the Vedas, it is their de-facto parent. It is this reason why OM is always said before recitation of the hymns of the Vedas is commenced. It is a prefix of the hymns and reminds the aspirant of the supreme Brahm who these Vedas refer to, and who was existent even before these Vedas came into being. In other words, if the Vedas are revered and honoured, then their source, the spring-board from where they originated, i.e. Brahm represented by OM, the sound symbol of Brahm, should be given more

respect. This is because OM representing Brahm is like the ‘parent’ of the Vedas. Brahm is more exalted than and superior to all the hymns of the Vedas put together just like the father who is shown more respect than the off spring. Further, since the hymns of the Vedas are ‘chanted or said’ using letters and words which are spoken by the medium of speech, an aphorism for sound, it follows that OM, the ethereal sound, is a pre-requisite for the revelation of the Vedas. Without sound there can be no spoken word. In fact, the spoken word is a manifestation of sound having ‘life’ in it in the sense that the word has a meaning which lends it its importance and value. If the spoken word has no meaning, it is a lifeless jumble of sounds which are nothing but a nuisance. Without words the Vedas can’t be either revealed or transmitted from one generation to another. Since the Vedas are the first and the primary body of knowledge, their origin in the primordial and primary form of sound known as OM is easy to conceptualize and understand.]

All the four Vedas are the four Paads or legs or aspects of OM (representing the supreme divinity known as Brahm). The first Matra or letter that is equivalent to its first Paad is ‘A’. It represents the Prithivi or the earth. It is from this ‘A’ that the first of the Vedas, i.e. the Rig/Rik Veda and its Richas (hymns) were created. The creator of the visible world, i.e. Lord Brahma (the first of the Trinity Gods)), the different Vasus¹ (assets or wealth that was created in the beginning to sustain life on earth), the Gayatri Chanda² (the first poetical metre in which the hymns of the Vedas were pronounced), and the sacred fire called the Garhyapatya Agni³ (the householder’s fire) were also created.

The second letter ‘U’ of the ethereal word OM represents the second Paad or leg of Brahm and the second Matra or aspect of OM. It gives rise to the Antariksha (the vast space of the sky above the earth), the Yajur Veda containing the Mantras called Yajus needed to perform the sacrifices during fire sacrifices, Lord Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation (the second of the Trinity Gods), Lord Rudra who is none but the supreme Brahm personified (as affirmed in the Atharvashir Upanishad, and therefore refers to the Viraat Purush whose manifestation is Lord Vishnu)⁴, the Trishtup Chanda⁵, and the second type of holy fire called the Dakshinagni⁶.

The third letter ‘M’ of the ethereal word OM represents the third Paad or leg of Brahm and the third Matra or aspect of OM. It is from this that the following units of creation were created—the Duloka (the heavens), the melodious hymns of the Sam Veda, the brilliant Aditya or the Sun God, the Rudra (that aspect of Brahm which helps to conclude the creation; the third of the Trinity Gods), the Jagati Chanda⁷, and the third holy fire called Ahawaniya⁸.

The fourth Matra of OM is called the ‘Ardha Matra’ because it is half a syllable, and is placed at the end of the letter ‘M’ (sound of M) and is a fragmented form of ‘M’⁹. It is this aspect of OM from which the Moon God (the Soma Loka), the Atharvan Mantras of the Atharva Veda, the Samvartak Agni¹⁰ (which is the universal fire of destruction), the Maruts¹¹ (the winds; the howling wind that blows during the doomsday), the Viraaj/Viraad¹², and the most brilliant and self-illuminated element which has the dazzle of ‘electric’—which implies the eternal and universal fire element.

[Now the colours of the four syllables are being described. The Sam Veda’s Yogchudamani Upanishad, in its verse nos. 75-78 also describes the colours of the syllables.] The first Matra of OM, i.e. the letter ‘A’, represents the colour red and yellow. Its patron deity is Brahma, the creator of this visible world.

The second Matra of OM, i.e. the letter 'U', represents the dark colour. Its patron deity is the self-illuminated and splendid Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation.

The third Matra of OM, i.e. the letter 'M', represents the colour white. Its patron deity is Rudra who is both the auspicious form of Brahm and the annihilator of creation.

[Rudra as being a dynamic form and a synonym of Brahm has been proclaimed by the Atharvashir Upanishad—this is his auspicious and benevolent form. Rudra is also known as the angry form of Shiva who is responsible for conclusion of creation—this is the annihilating role of Rudra in creation. There is no confusion in this apparent opposite and discordant role because 'Brahm' plays *all* the roles in creation, not only as concluder but even as the creator and sustainer of creation. This is because Brahm is the Supreme Being, and as such is responsible for all that is happening in this creation. Nothing happens without his knowledge, consent and order.]

The fourth Ardha Matra of OM, i.e. the sound that follows the pronunciation of the third letter 'M', represents an admixture of all the colours. Its patron deity is the glorious and majestic Viraat Purush, the all-pervading, all-encompassing invisible form of Brahm that is the macrocosmic gross body of the Supreme Being.

[This is a symbolic way of saying that whatever that exists in creation, or whatever that happens in creation is due to the Viraat Purush. In fact, this creation is a gross manifestation of the Viraat Purush who lives in his own creation and governs it from the inside like a great king who first founds a dynasty and then rules it as its supreme ruler. The primary form of the Viraat Purush would incorporate all the known forces of creation, all the myriad variations in which this creation exists. A simple example would illustrate this phenomenon. The light of the sun is known to have seven colours of the rainbow inherent to it—i.e. the colours of violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red, but the sunlight itself appears to be white; it does not indicate on the surface that all these colours are hidden inside it. Similarly, the Viraat Purush hides the entire creation in his bosom; he incorporates the entire gamut of creation in his being, but when the creation is actually revealed it begins to show no semblance of similarity to its parent, the Viraat. But when analyzed intelligently one comes to the conclusion that the creation actually depicts the countless virtues of the same divine entity revealed in myriad of forms.]

In this way, the ethereal word OM representing the supreme Divinity has four Paads or aspects symbolised by its four letters or syllables. This form is a gross form of Brahm and has three types of existence symbolized by the three types of pronunciations of OM—viz. the short, the medium and the long.

By saying OM three times, each for a longer duration than its previous utterance, and rounding it off with the longest humming of the letter 'M', the aspirant finally becomes silent and calmed down. By pronouncing OM with the longest sound (i.e. with a prolonged humming following the uttering of OM), the spiritual aspirant is able to experience the light of pure consciousness called the Atma residing in his inner self—that is, he becomes enlightened.

[In the beginning, the first utterance is of a comparatively short duration to indicate the preparatory stage. The second utterance is of a longer duration than the first, followed by the third utterance which is the longest. The first two utterances correspond to the letters A and U respectively, whilst the last and the third utterance culminating in

complete silence represents the third letter M, which is then followed by the Ardha Matra that indicates the conclusion of utterances symbolizing the calming down of the senses and nerves. In other words, there are three ways to say OM. The first way is to say the word OM once, and then talk about something else. The second way is to repeat OM for some time, but not in a sustained manner. And the third is to repeat OM continuously so much so that one is completely drowned in the vibrations produced by it in the inner-self of the aspirant. The last way is the best way for honest and faithful spiritual aspirants, and the resultant calmness and bliss that is experienced by him is tantamount to the conclusion of this creation because it helps him to shut off the deluding and distracting external world from his mental screen. An aspirant constantly repeating OM has no awareness of the outside world, and so for all practical purposes the latter is as good as not being there.]

That mystical word which has the magnificent and magical power to lift the aspirant spiritually upwards or make his vital winds or Pran upwardly mobile (as done during Yoga or meditation exercises) even by pronouncing it once is called OM.

[That is, OM has an inherent power built in it which lifts all those who associate themselves with it spiritually upwards just like Helium gas which has a natural tendency to lift all things filled with it upwards as opposed to other gases and ordinary air which keeps them moribund and earth-bound.]

Since OM has the astoundingly magical power to bring about a merger of all the five chief Prans or vital winds present inside the body (such as the Pran or breath, Apaana or the wind that moves in the intestine, the Vyana which helps maintain equilibrium, the Samaan which helps in distribution of nourishment equally in the body, and the Udaana which helps in lifting the body), it is called OM.

[This refers to the fourth stage corresponding to the Ardha Matra which symbolises the conclusion or dissolution of existence. This corresponds to the fourth state of existence of the consciousness, known as the Turiya state. During Yoga, which relies upon OM as the Mantra or formula to achieve success in concentration of mind (Dhyana) and control of breath (Pranayama), it is this merger of all the Prans and making them upwardly mobile through the Sushumna Naadi (the central nervous system), and their final reaching the top of the head where enlightenment and Brahma-realisation is experienced by the practitioner that is being referred to here when the 'merger of Prans' is cited as the reason of honouring the word OM with its divine powers.]

OM is called 'Pranava' because it enables all the vital life forces of the body called the Prans to bow down and surrender themselves to the 'self' or the Atma which is Brahma personified. Hence, it is called Pranava—literally meaning to respectfully bow down.

[It is called Pranava for other reasons as well. Such as for example, OM helps to attain the supreme state of realisation where the spiritual aspirant becomes self and Brahma realised. OM helps in reaching Brahma, also known as Pranava, and merger of the individual's Atma with the cosmic Atma by the process of deep meditation and contemplation, a process commonly known as Yoga, and hence it is called Pranava. OM helps one to overcome his ego and false sense of pride by helping him concentrate his energy to attain a higher state of existence, rather than remaining a slave of the body and its sense organs, by exercising rigorous control over them through various meditation techniques, hence it is called Pranava—to become humble and surrender one's self to the

Supreme Being instead of thinking oneself as being the Master and Lord of this world and its material sense objects.]

The complete word OM represents the fourth state of consciousness called the Turiya state (which is marked by peace, tranquility, serenity and bliss), and since the Gods exist in this state it is a comprehensive metaphor for all the Gods taken together.

Since everything in existence is incorporated in the three letters A, U and M of the word OM, it is a representative of Pranav or Brahm.

[This is because, as explained earlier in this Kandika, these three letters represent all the three phases of creation—viz. A stands for creation coming into being because Brahma is its patron deity, U represents the expansion and perpetration of creation because Vishnu is its patron deity, and M represents the conclusion of creation because Rudra is its patron deity. Since everything in creation is a manifestation of Brahm who is also known as Pranav, or better still, since Brahm or Pranav has revealed itself in the form of this creation, each unit is Brahm or Pranav in some way or the other. Therefore, the entire creation is OM personified because it is a representative of Brahm or Pranav which are the two names of the Supreme Being.]

Since OM exists in four subtle aspects which cannot be separated from one another, it represents the four Vedas (Rig/Rik, Sam, Yajur and Atharva) which though appearing to be separate are basically inalienable and one single unit.

[The four subtle aspects of OM have been fully described in the earlier part of this Kandika.]

It is a representative of all things that have a name and can be known.

[For example, the knowledge is given name as the four Vedas. This knowledge can be grasped and understood. Hence, it represents OM. On the other end of the spectrum we have the incomprehensible and most enigmatic divine entity known as 'consciousness' or Atma which cannot be taught and understood like the knowledge of the Vedas, but can be experienced only. It cannot be taught like the Vedas but has to be witnessed personally in the form of 'self-realisation', or understanding what is the true meaning of the term 'self'. This is known as 'enlightenment'. Hence, both the aspects of existence—the gross as well as the subtle—represent OM.]

[Note—¹The *Vasus*—There are eight *Vasus* who are the various patron Gods who preside over the essentials of life—Vishnu who is the sustainer, Shiva who is the annihilator, Kuber who is the treasurer of the wealth of the Gods, the Sun, Water, Fire, Wealth represented by gems and gold, and 'Ray' representing glory and fame. The element 'Fire' is the most potent, prominent and essential force in creation, because without fire the world would freeze to death. Hence, the Fire-God is said to be the chief amongst the *Vasus*. The 'fire' element is the active force in creation and is primarily responsible for kindling the cosmic cauldron that set in motion the process, and once having set it in motion it then sustained it and would finally annihilate it by burning it to cinders. On the other hand, Lord Vishnu is the passive force of creation represented by his other form of Viraat Purush which is the primary male aspect of creation. Lord Vishnu, who is the sustainer of the creation, is the Lord of Laxmi who is the Goddess of wealth, and is the supreme creator because Brahma, the old patriarch of creation who created the visible world and its creatures, was himself born atop the divine lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu utilizes the services of Laxmi who is the personification of the active forces of creation to create, sustain and annihilate the world.

The Vasus are symbolic Gods who represent those essentials aspects of creation without which life would be difficult to conceive and sustain and finally conclude.

The eight Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolise those primary necessities of life without which existence is not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun God (who provides energy and food) and his rays and radiance (i.e. sunlight and the energy that it provides), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire God (called Agni), (vii) any body of water such as a pond, a river etc., and (viii) holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation). According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following—Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon, and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets).

According to Purans, the eight Vasus are the following-- Dhruv, Dhar, Som/Soma (the sap of an elixir-providing plant called Som/Soma which is used during religious ceremonies as sanctified liquid offered to the Gods), Aapah (water), Anil (wind), Anal (fire), Pratush and Prabhaas.

These eight Vasus are the semi-Gods who symbolise the various types of assets needed to sustain this world. They therefore represent such assets as jewels, precious stones and gems, gold and other forms of wealth and property. Vasus also refers to the fire and water elements as well as their grosser forms as the terrestrial fire and water bodies such as ponds and lakes; to the virtue of radiance, splendour and glory; to the ray of light; to Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), Shiva, Sun, Vishnu, and a simple and pious gentleman.

The Ekakhar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 7, says that these Vasus are manifestations of Brahm in order to provide the creation with the necessities of life.

²The Gayatri Chanda— The *Chandas* are a poetic style in which the verses of the Vedas were composed. These compositions rendered the sacred hymns or psalms of the Vedas with the melody of poetry which, in turn, symbolise the skill one has with words as well as the literary genius, erudition, scholarship, learning and wisdom of the ancient sages who first inhabited this earth. Since knowledge had to be preserved and transmitted orally, it was thought prudent that lines that rhymed like a poem and which could be sung were easy to remember than paragraphs after paragraphs of dry prose. That's why, in ancient times, poetry was the usual and most accepted medium of disseminating knowledge and information. Hymns that could be chanted with a particular beat and rhythm were more acceptable than a monotonous dry prose. The Vedas stand for wisdom and enlightenment, knowledge and information. The knowledge or the science of creation and Nature needed words to be understood and explained to others, giving rise to the need for a system or style of narration called 'Chandas' which were poetic narrative styles. The word 'Chanda' means —a poetic composition, rhyme, a metre or stanza in poetry, a measure in music, or hymns or psalms of the Vedas.

The Chandas are a special type of poetic composition used by Brahma to create the texture of the fabric of knowledge in the form of the Vedas. The material used to make this fabric was the profound wisdom and the essential truths of creation as enshrined in the Vedas. This system of composing the religious text of the scriptures is in vogue since earlier times and such verses are called hymns as they are dedicated to the offering of prayers and honouring the chosen deity for which the particular hymns is meant. These hymns are also called Mantras because they are like mystical formula specific to that deity; they help the worshipper to activate the dynamic forces of Nature and creation as represented by this deity who is actually a personified form of these

forces. Each deity had a particular hymns dedicated to it much like we have specific formulas in science or mathematics to solve specific problems. No one formula applies to all the problems in a universal manner, though there are some universal ones also which can be applied to all the cases, such as the Mantra OM which is used equally for all the deities. The reason is that OM represents the supreme transcendental Brahm whose manifestations all these individual deities or Godheads are. This is like the case of one listening to a particular radio station of his choice when he must tune-in to the particular frequency in which that radio station broadcasts.

The *Gayatri Chanda* has 24 letters and syllables in all which are divided into 3 steps or stanzas of 8 letters or syllables each. Hence the total is $3 \times 8 = 24$.

Amongst the Chandas, the Gayatri Chanda is considered the best and the most ancient because it was in this style that the creator Brahma had first revealed the primary hymns of the Rig and other Vedas. This fact is corroborated by the Gaytri Upanishad which is actually the Atharva Veda's eight Kandikas (sub-sections), from 31 to 38, of the Gopath Brahman which are collectively known as the Gayatri Upanishad. A famous Mantra dedicated to the Sun God is also called Gayatri Mantra because of the fact that it was the first such Mantra revealed by the creator Brahma in the composition style called Gayatri and became synonymous with it.

³The *Garhyapatya Fire*—Refer Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/3-6, 4/11/1-2, 4/17/4. It is the fire of the household hearth; the main fire of the formal fire sacrifice; the fire that every householder is supposed to keep alive and worship regularly and from which the first spark is taken for the rituals associated with religious ceremonies. A householder has land and farm representing 'earth' in which he grows food. This food is grown with the help of the light of the Sun, and it is cooked in the fire of the fire place in the house. Hence, the Garhyapatya fire, or the householder's fire, is intrinsically present and is implied in these four entities. It is an integral part of these four. The earth has the 'fire element' because without heat and warmth, no seed would germinate and no life can survive on this earth. The food has fire present inherently in it because it is the energy inherent in food which helps to energise the creature that eats it. The presence of heat in the sun does not need to be explained because it is very evident.

⁴Lord *Vishnu* and *Rudra* symbolise two dynamic aspects of Brahm. The former is the sustainer and protector of the visible world that Brahma the creator created, while the latter is the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic gross body of the Supreme Being and a sublime form of Vishnu. In fact, Vishnu and the Viraat Purush are usually treated as one deity called by these two names according to the context. The synonymous nature of Rudra and Brahm has been the subject of the entire Atharvashir Upanishad.

⁵The *Trishtup Chanda* is a verse of 4 lines in which each line has 11 letters; $11 \times 4 = 44$ letters in all.

⁶The *Dakshinagni Agni*—Refer Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/7-10, 4/13/1-2, 4/17/5. This holy fire is a witness to making of charities when some water is poured as libation to the Gods. It signifies that the Gods are offered water to drink. To give water to the thirsty is the greatest for of charity. Therefore, this fire is symbolically present in water, and when it is poured, it signifies that the heat produced by sins committed by the person has been doused. Charities and donations make a man famous and renowned, hence the allusion to directions of the earth. His glory shines like the bright moon and he is called a star among human beings. He is the most exalted amongst his peers and compatriots even as the moon is most prominent amongst the stars in the sky.

Like in the case of the Garhyapatya fire, the fire that was lit in the main sacrificial shed or site just near the main fire pit but to the south of it and where donations and charities were made was called Dakshinagni fire. The fire pit for this fire was semi-circular or bow-shaped.

⁷The *Jagati Chanda*—is a verse of 4 lines with 12 letters in each line, bringing the total number of letters to 48.

⁸The *Ahawaniya fire*—Refer Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/11-16, 4/14/1-2, 4/17/6. The Ahawaniya fire is lit during the fire sacrifices to respectfully invoke Gods, and invite them to come and participate in the sacrifice and accept offerings made to them. The word 'Aavaahan' in Sanskrit means to invite, invoke, to pray respectfully with the intention of welcoming. Since one uses one's mouth for these purposes, the fire in the form of the strength, energy and vigour of the spoken word and the power of speech residing in the mouth is called Ahawaniya fire. This fire was lit to invoke the Gods, and the Gods live in the heaven; hence the reference to the sky, heavens and electric. Since Pran is the best form of the vital winds, the allusion means that the Gods are the most exalted forms that exist in creation. The 'electric' is a metaphor for immense strength, potent and power, which of course the fire possesses. This inherent quality of Electric that it possess most stupendous powers and strength is likened to the presence of Brahm in it even as the great power and strength present in a man is due to the Atma or Pran present in him. Even as a man is useless without the presence of Pran in him, the Electric would lose its importance if there was no Brahm present in it which gives it its punch and strength.

In ancient times it was an established belief and tradition that the way to attain heaven was through the path of the fire sacrifice. The fire sacrifice was in effect a method to harness the spiritual energy inherent in the all pervading fire element which would sufficiently empower the person performing the fire sacrifice to achieve his goal. The sacrificial pit and the heat generated from it reminds one of the modern day nuclear reactors. Even as the strength and energy and powers of the atom can be harnessed for beneficial or ruinous effects through the nuclear reactor, depending upon the temperament and mental setup of the person who masters the science of atomic energy, the fire sacrifice could be similarly used either for auspicious purposes such as attaining eternal peace and tranquility for the tormented soul, or for attaining worldly glory and conquest. Harnessing of nuclear energy requires expertise, knowledge and skills not easy to master and not accessible to all. Building and operating a nuclear facility also is a daunting and elaborate job. Similarly, the ancient fire sacrifices required special skills and expertise, and it was not simply lighting any odd evening village community bonfire to the merriment of all those who sit around it to gossip about the day's events.

⁹The *Ardha Matra* refers to a half-syllable. Normally, the letter 'M' of the word OM is to be hummed in a prolonged sound stretching into infinity. But since it is not done and the worshipper becomes silent, it is called 'half Matra' or half syllable. It is tantamount to conclusion of the word OM, and since OM is envisioned as representing the whole gamut of creation, this Ardha Matra is symbolic of conclusion of creation. That is why it is accompanied by the universal fire of destruction called the Samvartak Agni.

¹⁰The phrase *Samvartak Agni* refers to the fire that engulfs the earth at the time of dooms-day, because the word 'Samvartak' means the end of an era or a period of time, and Agni means fire. It also has two other connotations—viz. (1) The dooms-day cloud, because at the time of conclusion of one cycle of creation and destruction there is torrential rain which causes a deluge that drown the entire habitation on the surface of the earth. In this scenario, only certain forms of aquatic life survive, and from it the seed of the next cycle of creation is sown. (2) The fire burning under the bed of the ocean and in the bowls of the earth which keeps the water of the ocean as well as the underground springs warm. This fire is called 'Barwaanal' or 'Badvaanal'. In the present verse, this fire has been personified as the sage who first conceptualised this Upanishad.

¹¹The *Maruts* are the various names given to the Wind God. There are said to be 49 in number, and are the Wind-Gods mentioned in Rig Veda, 1/37-39 and 1/165/3, 5, 7, 9.

They are regarded variously as—(i) sons of Indra and Vrishni (Rig Veda, 2/34/2), (ii) Sons of Rudra (Rig Veda, 2/33/1), (iii) similar to the Fire-God (Rig Veda, 6/66/2), and (vi) Indra God (Rig Veda, 1/165, 171). The Purans call them sons of sage Kashyap and Diti.

¹²The word *Viraaj* or *Viraad* has two connotations. One, it refers to the *Viraat Chanda* which is a verse that has four lines each having ten letters, bringing the number of letters to 40, and two, it means the eldest son of Brahma the creator. If the second connotation is to be considered then the Maruts, the various Wind Gods would deem to be the Viraad.]

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Chapter 7, Part 1

The Revelation of Creation

The Creation of the Vedas

7.1 The Sita Upanishad:--

(Verse nos. 24-32)

These verses describe the origin of the Vedas, regarded as the most ancient texts that were revealed to ancient sages and seers when they meditated.

24-25 Depending upon the type of incantation, the hymns have been further divided into a number of branches—the Rig Veda has twenty one branches [24], the Yajur Veda has one hundred and nine branches, the Sam Veda has one thousands branches, and the Atharva Veda has five branches [25] (24-25).

26. In the Vedas, the philosophy or school of thought that pertains to the Vaikhanas¹ (i.e. that spiritual and metaphysical philosophy that focuses on renunciation of and detachment from Maya-created delusory and artificial world, and instead focus on the supreme Reality that is hidden behind the illusionary façade of ‘false reality’; here Lord Ram is treated as the universal supreme Vaikhanas—see verse no. 20) has been given the first place, and hence erudite and wise sages and seers concentrate their attention and focus their mind on it. It is called the supreme knowledge that is undisputable, irrefutable and beyond doubt as it enlightens an aspirant about the ultimate Absolute Truth of creation. This knowledge comes with intense research and concentration of the mind-intellect complex and its ancillary unit known as the sub-conscious or Chitta.

The power of the mind-intellect and the sub-conscious that enabled the ancient sages and seers who had renounced all aspects of the delusory world and focused their attention on the sublime knowledge pertaining to the cosmic Truth (known as Brahm or the cosmic Consciousness) that is obtained by such intense focusing of the mind and the sub-conscious is known as the ‘Chitta Shakti’. Like any other achievements in this world, this knowledge of the ‘supreme’ was known as ‘enlightenment’, and it was powered by the Chitta Shakti² (26).

[Note—¹*Vaikhanas*—The knowledge that fills the spiritual aspirant with total renunciation of this material world and its deluding charms by teaching him about the falsehood of this artificial world, about his own true self being the pure consciousness that is wise, enlightened, eternal and blissful, and about the supreme Consciousness that is the cause of this creation, along with the true meaning of liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation, is called Vaikhanas knowledge. It is the main thrust of the Vedas to enlighten the creature about the Truth, and this intention of these holy texts is

carried out by the Upanishads which are an inseparable part of the Vedas and enshrine their pristine philosophy.

²*Chitta Shakti*—The word *Chitta* refers to the faculty of reasoning and thought of the mind-intellect complex; the ability to pay attention and fix concentration upon a chosen subject which leads to understanding and a sharp memory; the conscious intellect as well as the sub-conscious mind; the powers of discrimination, understanding, paying attention, memorizing, and the ability to recollect and store information that are characteristics of the conscious powers exhibited by the mind and intellect apparatus; the sub-conscious and memory, along with its power to remember anything as depicted when the man involuntarily reacts to any given situation depending upon his memory-bank; the ability to concentrate and focus the mind on anything. The concept has been elaborately described in Chandogya Upanishad, canto 7, section 5; Sanayso-panishad, canto 2, verse no.42-46.

The word *Shakti* means power and authority, potentials and energy that any entity possesses. Therefore, the combined stupendous powers exhibited by ‘Chitta’ are called Chitta Shakti.

Chitta is an integral *component of the Antahakaran* or the ‘inner self’ of a living being. This has been described in—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shaarirako Upanishad of, verse no. 4; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 101-102; (b) Shukla Yajur Veda’s Paingal Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9, Canto 2, verse no. 3; Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6; Subalo-panishad, Canto 9, verse no. 14.]

27-28 The ancient sages have said that the Vedas have six limbs or branches. They are the following—Kalpa (a sacred performance; Vedic rituals), Vyakaran (grammar), Shiksha (education; the fundamental tents and knowledge that the Vedas expound), Nirukta (unspoken knowledge, or implied knowledge contained in the Vedic cannons; exposition of the Vedas; etymological explanation of a word or hymn) Jyotish (astrology; astronomy, mathematical calculations), and Chanda (style of poetic composition) [27].

They have three supplementary body of knowledge that are complementary to the main text—viz. Ayan (Vedanta; Upanishad), Mimansa (thorough discussion and debate to investigate a particular point of Hindu philosophy), and Nyaya (Vedic law and jurisprudence). Those who are steady and diligent in Dharma (righteousness, ethics and proper way of conduct and thought) regard the study of the Vedas incomplete if it does not include the study of all their branches or limbs and supplementary body of knowledge alongside them [28] (27-28).

29-31 Ancient wise sages and seers had, from time to time, elucidated upon the Vedic tenets and philosophy by composing their own essays and commentaries on them, called ‘Nibandh’, which were basically detailed exposition explaining the particular aspect of the Veda so that the people can easily understand them and mould their personal lives according to their teaching. Consequentially, the life and behaviour of the society at large became sanctified, auspicious and righteous in a wholesome form when it conformed to the high standards of ethical and righteous behaviour and thought as envisioned in the Vedas.

These wise, erudite and enlightened sages and seers, have, from time to time, and depending upon circumstances and needs of the society, added pristine philosophy and their own views and commentaries to further enrich the scriptures, called the various

‘Dharma Shastras’, which had come down to them from the hoary past. [The word ‘Dharma Shastra’ itself means those scriptures that establish Dharma.]

These sages and seers produced or composed the five ‘Up-Vedas’, or the subsidiary Vedas—viz. Itihas and Purans (mythological histories of the ancients) [29], Vastu Veda (the science of building and construction; architecture and its relevant subjects), Dhanur Veda (archery and the science of warfare), Gandharva Veda (the science of music, singing and dancing as well as the skills needed for theatrical performance), and Ayurveda (the science of medicinal herbs) [30].

Besides these, they created the treatises on subjects such as Danda and Niti (law of punishment according to sin or crime, and the law governing morality and ethics), Varta (the art of conversation, negotiation and debate), Vidya (general knowledge and skills), and the science and art of controlling the Vayu or the vital winds (i.e. Yoga which is the science of controlling the vital winds in the body by means of meditative exercise that helps one to establish oneself in the supreme state of existence, or attain a high pedestal of existence that is much above the humdrum life of the world).

These twenty-one branches or limbs of knowledge are deemed to be self-illuminating in nature; they enrich and enlighten the life of a living being in this world [31] (29-31).

32. In some hoary, ancient past, Lord Vishnu’s sweet words revealed themselves as the three Vedas in the heart of one sage named Vaikhanas¹ (32).

[Note—¹Earlier, in verse no. 20 it has been said that Lord Ram is the supreme Vaikhanas or the greatest soul who has the highest virtues of renunciation and detachment from this material world. He remains totally disassociated from this world inspite of having lived as a great ruler of the kingdom of Ayodhya and the slayer of the demon Ravana, and around whom the legendary epic Ramayan has been woven. In fact, Lord Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being who is also known as the Viraat Purush because of his macrocosmic all-pervading and all-encompassing existence. Vishnu had to come down on earth in order to eliminate evil forces represented by the demons, and to restore law and order as envisioned in the scriptures and to uphold their sanctity.

Now in the present verse a Vaikhanas is mentioned in whose heart the Vedas emerged. It is well established that the Vedas were created by Brahma, the cosmic creator. This Brahma emerged, sitting atop a lotus, from the navel of the Viraat Purush in his manifestation as Vishnu while the latter reclined on the bedstead made of the cosmic serpent known as Sheshnath. Brahma is one of the Gods of the Trinity, the others being Vishnu and Shiva. So, the Vaikhanas referred to here is most probably Brahma, the creator. When anyone speaks of something as thoughtful and having such an immense philosophical dimension as the Vedas, it is his heart that gets directly involved. Anything spoken from the deep recesses of the heart has firmness of conviction and faith. Speaking from the heart is a metaphor for sincerity, honesty, commitment and faith in what is being said. So, what the Vedas say is the truth which Vishnu wished to reveal.

Again, it might be that there was some ancient sage with the name of Vaikhanas. If this is the case then most probably he was sage Kapil. This is because the next verse no. 33 says that this sage named Vaikhanas revealed this great body of knowledge with which he was enlightened by the grace of Lord Vishnu in the form of Sankhya Shastra.]

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Chapter 7, Part 2

The revelation of the ‘Spoken Word or Speech’

7.2

The Yogshikha Upanishad:--

(Canto 3, verse nos. 1-11)

The genesis of the spoken word or speech has been beautifully and succinctly narrated in Yogshikha Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 3, verse nos. 1-11.

Now let us read about it.

1-2. That which is worthy of bowing before and showing honour and due reverence, that which is said to be consciousness personified, that which is the cause of all mystical powers and authority, that whose knowledge and awareness provides a man with liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death [1]—it is that divine and eclectic entity which is known as ‘Akchar’ or the one who is imperishable and immune to decay and destruction, it is that eternal and all-pervading entity which is symbolised by the great cosmic reverberating sound known as Naad, and it is also known as ‘Shadda Brahm’ or the supreme Divinity revealed in the form of ‘sound’ (which in turn is at the root of the spoken ‘word’).

The divine subtle cosmic energy that supports the entire creation is present inherently in the Mooladhar Chakra, and it is also known as ‘Bindu’ or Shakti [2]. (1-2).

3. It is in this Bindu (ethereal energy) that Naad originates¹. This is just like the case of a sprout having its origin in a small seed². The subtle energy of sound present in the Naad is called ‘Pashyanti’, and it is utilised by a wise and erudite ascetic to see and visualise the rest of the world around him³ (3).

[Note--¹Naad is a form of cosmic sound, and this sound is a form of energy created by vibrations in ether. In other words, during the process of Yoga, when the vital winds, especially the Apaan wind is made to activate the Mooladhar Chakra by literally vibrating or shaking it into action, the latent energy trapped inside it is activated to produce the sound much like striking of the tuning fork produces sound in a school physics laboratory. Another example to show how sound has a pinpoint Bindu or dot as its origin is the ripple created on the surface of a calm lake when a stone is thrown in it. The ripples would have a single point as their origin point where the stone had touched the surface of the water, and then the waves spread out in concentric circles, one after another. Since sound also travels in waves in ether of space, this example would prove why and how the origin of Naad was envisioned in the Bindu (dot) by the ancient sage who had first visualised it.

²This is another interesting analogy. The seed is round and small—almost like a Bindu or dot—when compared to the huge tree that it would produce. The sprout is like a

Lingam or phallus coming out of it. One is left marveling at the wonderful imagery used in the Upanishads to explain concepts.

³The Naad or cosmic sound that is physically heard during Yoga is a manifestation of the dynamic forces or Shakti of Brahm, the energy present in this Naad is that dynamic force or Shakti itself. Taking a parallel from the physical world, the Naad is like the eye of the body but the eye function only because it has the energy to do so and has been empowered by the faculty of sight to see. In other words, the ascetic sees this living world characterised by the presence of sound as a revelation of Brahm who is universally and uniformly present throughout it in an imperceptible and subtle form. The fact that 'sound characterizes this world as living as opposite to being dead' is proved by the fact that there is utter silence in a morgue or grave yard whereas there is hustle and bustle of life in a busy city. For all practical purposes of Yoga as described in this Upanishad, this Naad and its subtle energy called Pashyanti is located in the Mooladhar Chakra.]

4. [The earlier verses had dealt with the Naad that was heard by the ascetic while the mind was fixed in the Mooladhar Chakra. Now the attention shift to the heart region where the Hridaya Chakra of the Anahat Chakra is located.]

The roaring sound heard in the region of the heart is like the distant thundering of the clouds. Oh Brahma! The divine Shakti located here is called 'Madhyama' or the one that is located in the middle (because the heart is located in the central part of the body and mid way between the Mooladhar Chakra at the bottom and the 'Brahm Randhra Chakra or Sahasrar Chakra' at the top of the head) (4).

5-6. [Verse nos. 5-10 describe how a man is enabled to speak.]

This Shakti (ability) derives its powers from the Pran Vayu (breath). [This is because the breath draws in fresh air and oxidises the blood. The breath also keeps the heart beating as is evident from the event when the heart immediately stops beating if one is killed by blocking of breath as during suffocation.]

This power of breath enables a person to speak, and thereby it enables this Shakti (the Madhyama Shakti of the heart or Anahat Chakra) to move out of the body by the way of the mouth (in the form of the spoken word) and spread its wings to reach another person in the form of the energy of the sound. This in practice means the spoken word is heard by the second person, the 'hearer'.

This Shakti which moves out from the mouth in the form of spoken words to rest on another person in the form of words heard by him is called 'Vaikhari'.

While doing so, i.e. while spreading out to reach other places, it acts like the tree which spreads out its branches that give out smaller shoots that bear leaves and flowers and fruits. This helps the tree to cover a wide area around it which is much larger than original thickness of the stem of the tree or the limited area which its root covers under the ground.

When the dynamic energy of the comic Naad passes through the cavity of the mouth and rubs against its walls and fine-tuned by the muscles of the tongue when the vital forces of life called Pran (breath) are exhaled through the open mouth, its frequencies undergo certain changes so much so that now they come within audible range and can be heard as the spoken word. The tongue's flexible muscles help to make the jumble of meaningless sounds into meaningful words that are clearly articulate and understandable [5].

This produces various genres of sound from which arise all the alphabets of the language—from the first letter ‘A’ (as in *alloy*) of the Sanskrit alphabet to the last letter ‘Ha’ (as in *hung*).

Combination of letters produce words, and combination of words produce phrases, sentences and paragraphs, and their numerous spin-offs such as poetry and stanzas [6]. (5-6).

[Note—These two verses briefly describe the genesis of the spoken language.]

7. All the Mantras, all the Vedas and other scriptures, all the Purans and numerous other narratives and poetical compositions, all the uncountable dialects and languages in existence—they are all indeed a manifestation of the Vakya or the word which is a manifestation of the cosmic dynamic energy called Shakti in its second form known as ‘Vaikhari’. The dynamo that powers this Shakti is the beating heart—or the activated Hridaya Chakra because as soon as the heart stops to beat no one can speak a word (7).

8. All the seven basic sounds of classical music, called the ‘Swaras’ (Sa, Re, Ga Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni) as well as all the various Gathas (narrative compositions that were transmitted by orally singing method) are manifestation of Naad¹.

Goddess Saraswati, the patron goddess of speech, learning and wisdom, who resides in the mouth of all living beings (and enables them to speak in their own tongue or language), is indeed a manifestation of Naad. [That is why Saraswati is depicted in iconography as holding a Veena, the Indian lute, as a symbol of her singing prowess. Since singing needs a finer tuned voice, special vocal skills and expert command over the language and its finer nuances, and also because the verses have to be memorized by heart to be sung without break as compared to the simple and routine exercise of daily talking or speaking, the most appropriate depiction of the eclectic nature of the cosmic Naad is not as simple words spoken in daily routine life but as the inherent music of classical and melodious singing. This is also why in the Upanishads that describe Naad, it is likened to the cosmic ‘music’ heard by the ascetic while he is submerged deep in meditation.] (8).

[Note--¹This is because Naad incorporates all known genres of sound. There is no sound that is not incorporated in Naad. Refer Naad Bindu and Aksha-maliko Upanishads of Rig Veda tradition as well as Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 2-37 and Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 80 of the Sam Veda tradition in this context of the sound produced by Naad.

Now let us briefly analyse how the uniform sound of the Naad is broken up into letters and forms what is called speech. When the exhaled breath rubs against the muscles of the vocal cords, it produces a sound resembling the cosmic homogenous sound called the Naad. But as it happens, the angle at which the breath rubs against these vocal cords and the flexible muscles of the tongue help to break up the wavelength of this homogenous sound wave into many waves of differing wavelength and frequencies, thereby creating sound of different tones, notes and pitches. These sound waves are modulated and fine-tuned in such a way that they are interpreted by the brain of the hearer as letters, which in turn form intelligent words and sentences. The Swaras are the basic or primary form in which the Naad is broken into.

It ought to be noted here that the basic Swars or tones and notes of music are ‘seven’ in number and the colours in the sunlight are also ‘seven’; there is a natural and obvious correlation between them which leads us to a very interesting analogy. Just like the sunlight is scattered into seven basic and primary colours—viz. violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red when it is scattered by the water molecules in the earth’s atmosphere during and after rainfall into seven wavelengths resulting in the formation of the rainbow, as well as when white light breaks up into seven colours when it passes through a transparent glass prism, the uniform sound of the Naad breaks up into waves of seven wavelengths or frequencies which are picked up by the brain as seven Swars—viz. Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni. This is ‘music’, but when the same theory is extended further we can imagine how the sounds of the vowels, consonants and sibilant letters are formed. To understand how this comes about, we can draw on the example of light in physics and recall the physical phenomenon called the ‘Raman Effect’ in which the monochromatic light is further scattered to produce additional lines in the spectrum when a beam of light is further scattered by a transparent material medium. The ‘Raman Effect’ shows how the energy and hence the wavelength or the frequency of the light falling upon a suitable molecule is ‘modified and modulated according to the combined effect of the basic energy of the molecule as well as the energy of the incident light during the process of light transmission through this medium’; it is because there is an exchange of energy either way between the incident light and the molecules of the medium through which it is being transmitted. Therefore the modification or modulation is surely characteristic of the molecule of which the medium is made up of as much as it is on the energy of the incident light.

In the present context we can now easily visualise how the sound waves of different wavelengths or frequencies are created and why a single basic sound-form can be further broken up and fine-tuned to form the different letters of the same group of vowels and consonants of the Sanskrit language. The modulation and modification is done by the vocal cords in close concert with the tongue and the muscles of the mouth cavity which have been designed and constructed by Mother Nature with expert sense of acoustics in mind. Different subtle characteristics and temperaments of the speaker which are controlled by numerous elements which determine an individual’s uniqueness, such as his different Gunas (inherent virtues and qualities of which there are three main ones—viz. Sata, Raja and Tama), the different Vrittis and Vasanas (mental tendencies, natural temperaments, passions, desires and habits), Ahankar (ego, self-pride), Mana (natural inclination and state of the mind and heart), and so many other incidental factors that determine his personality, outlook, emotions, sentiments, state of the mind and thought processes come into play to decide how the same wavelength or frequency of sound that creates a given letter, and hence the spoken language, is modulated and modified by different individuals to create different impressions of the meaning of the same word. It shows how the same word of the same language is spoken differently by different people, and how it is transformed to mean different things to different people.]

9. [This verse describes how a man is enabled to speak.]

When the Pran Vayu (the vital winds of the body, especially the breath and the one which infuses life and vitality in the body) is heated and activated by the subtle energy present inside the body, especially the one known as Madhyama (see verse no. 4 above), it transforms or metamorphoses into sounds revealed in the form of words, sentences and paragraphs during its movement inside and outside the body¹ (9).

[Note--¹The sound is produced when the exhaled air makes the vocal cords vibrate in the throat. So a combination of factors come into play here—viz. the movement and speed of the air moving in the outwards direction through the mouth, the health and flexibility of the muscles of the throat and the vocal cords, the constriction that is created in order to make the air rub against the cords with the desired angle and force etc. The Pran wind is aided by the Apan wind also as these sounds are produced in the mouth and not in the nose. It is to be noted here that the Madhyama Shakti has transformed itself as Vaikhari Shakti in the mouth. Earlier the Pran Vayu was inhaled and exhaled through the nose when the mouth was shut and the man was silent during Pranayam. To speak, this same Pran Vayu changes its path and now it moves through the mouth, thereby activating this Vaikhari Shakti latently present there but hitherto lying dormant. The Apan wind is known to move down in the body, and hence it creates a sucking action of air in the mouth when it is opened to speak. This is like the filling on an iron-smith's bellows. The 'inhaled' breath is the Apan wind which fires the oven present in the lower end of the body—i.e. the Mooladhar Chakra, to arouse its 'Pashyanti Shakti' (described in verse no. 3). The energy then leaps up and powers the dynamo of the heart—i.e. it activates the Hridaya Chakra, and through it the 'Vaikhari Shakti' (described in verse nos. 5-6). The latter produces 'sound'. The upward pressure exerted by the compressed winds in the body is the cause of the activation of this Shakti. Since air that is being expelled with force through the cavities of the mouth and the throat to produce a sound which is fine-tuned by the tongue into articulate words is located in the upper part of the body, this aspect of vital wind that is associated with speech is called Pran.

In short, that aspect of the Pran Vayu that is inhaled during the time the mouth is open while one speaks is called Apan, and the Pran Vayu that is exhaled and which actually produces the sound is called Pran. The Apan stokes the fire of life in the body from below like the fire present in the oven below the grate, while the Pran is the heated and activated wind that moves up in the oven and makes a hissing and rasping sound as it rushes up and out of the mouth of the oven. This is also why we cannot speak while drawing in air but only when it is expelled from the body—because the wind responsible for speech is Pran and not Apan.

But it must be noted that both these two vital winds work in close cooperation with each other and do not oppose. No one can speak if there is no energy in the body to do so, and the Apan wind is responsible for digestion of food in the intestines so that the body is properly nourished and energized. Besides this point, the Pran wind would depend upon the Apan wind to be honoured as the producer of vocal sound because it is the Apan wind which heats up the body from below and helps to build up sufficient pressure on the lungs so that the air is expelled with enough force and pressure to produce sound when it ruffles or rubs against the vocal cords in the throat.

In a similar vein, the Pran wind keeps the body alive and active because no one can live for a second if the breathing stops, and the dead body would have no use for the Apan wind located in the intestines and the lower part of the body. Thus we observe that body these two winds play hand-in-hand and are like the two wheels of the chariot to make life meaningful and livable for the man.]

10. When a self-realised ascetic understands that his speech (or whatever words are spoken by him) is nothing but a revelation of the stupendous powers of his own Atma (pure consciousness) in the form of the Shakti (the subtle energy) called Bhaikari that has revealed itself as the faculty of speech and the spoken word, he is blessed by Goddess Saraswati (the patron goddess of this energy and its revelation as speech) so much so that

whatever he utters becomes a reality. None of his words go in vain; they are truthful and bear fruit (10).

11. Since Saraswati is the patron goddess of knowledge and wisdom besides being the goddess of speech, it follows that such an ascetic (as described in previous verses) is himself a creator of the Vedas, various scriptures and Purans (ancient histories)¹.

The Bindu and Naad² are like the Moon and the Sun³, or like the Agni (fire) and the Vayu (wind)⁴ respectively.

Hence, a spiritual aspirant who has the grand ability to bear both these two primary forces of creation can have the required prowess, aptitude and skills to become a symbolic creator of the Vedas, Purans and other scriptures⁵ (11).

[Note—¹In other words, an ascetic who has realised the true divine potential of his Atma is blessed with such mystical powers that he need not study the various scriptures separately to become learned and wise, for all the eclectic virtues that are purported and implied in the teaching of the scriptures in the form of their various tenets, maxims and axioms automatically come to him on their own. Another interpretation would be this—the Atma is Brahm manifested, and since all the scriptures are creations of Brahm in the form of divine ethereal words that are eternal and imperishable, and this Atma is the one which makes the ascetic speak these words by harnessing the Vaikhari Shakti, it follows that the words spoken by the ascetic are the words of wisdom spoken by none else but Brahm. That ‘Shakti’ aspect of Brahm which reveals itself in the form of words of wisdom is personified in the form of the Goddess Saraswati.

²The Bindu means a ‘point-source’, and Naad refers to the ‘un-manifest cosmic energy in the form of sound’ that radiated out in the cosmic ether from this point-source. Therefore, the Bindu would refer to the passive Brahm and the Naad would mean in this context the dynamic and active energy of this Brahm radiating out from this point-source to all the directions of creation much like the rays of the sun radiating out from its disc to illuminate the vast realm of this world. Refer note to verse no. 3 of the present Canto 3 also.

²The Moon is a passive source of light because it simply reflects the light of the Sun falling on it, and hence the active source of light is the Sun. Had there been no Sun, the Moon would not show its light. In the context of Brahm and creation this analogy applies most aptly. The stupendous and astounding powers that Brahm inherently possesses are highlighted in the context of the most fascinating, majestic and magnificently wondrous world it has created using its own energy called Shakti. Had this creation not been in existence, the powers of Brahm would have remained unknown and un-revealed; it would not have come to the fore. In other words, the active principle of Brahm is revealed in the form of the Shakti which resembles the grand Sun in the sky—brilliant, splendorous, potent and fiery in its form, whilst the principal itself is passive and reflected in its own glory like the Moon shining in the glory of the Sun. That is why Brahm is said to be personified grand virtues of peace, tranquility, serenity and calmness represented by the Moon, while Shakti is a personification of energy, heat, vigour, vitality and dynamism symbolised by the Sun.

³The same analogy applies to the fire and wind elements in this context. Since the Bindu is regarded as the Shakti principle of Brahm in Tantra literature because it is this principal point from where the primary form of active and dynamic Brahm started to reveal its self in the form of Naad, it is likened to the ‘fire element’. The Naad itself is sound and the latter needs the medium of ether to travel as waves and spread in all the directions. Therefore, Naad is likened to the ‘wind element’.

⁵In other words, an ascetic who realises that he is Brahm personified as his subtle Atma or pure consciousness residing inside his inner self on the one hand, and as the various functions that this Brahm or Atma performs with the help of the gross body, one of which is the speech or the spoken word on the other hand, he is said to be an enlightened and wise ascetic. Since scriptures are synonymous with wisdom, erudition, eclectic knowledge and enlightenment, such an ascetic is deemed to be an expert in them, a fact metaphorically emphasised by saying that he can create these scriptures.]

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Chapter 7, Part 3

The Retrogression/Conclusion of Creation

7.3 (a) The Paingal Upanishad:--

(Canto 3, verse no. 6)

[The following verses describe the process by which the cosmic creator reversed the process of creation. In this context, refer also to Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 3.]

Verse no. 6 = The Ishwar decided to reverse the manifested creation consisting of the five Bhuts (the primary elements of creation earlier created by him in canto 1, verse no. 6) into its primary form. Hence, he transformed the entire creation from its 'action mode' to the 'cause mode'.

Then like an octopus withdrawing its tentacles, the subtle body, the organs of action, the Prans (vital winds), the organs of perception, the four Anthakarans, and converted them or reduced them into their basic elements from which they had been moulded at the time of creation.

Next, he merged earth into water (i.e. earth was submerged in water), water in fire (i.e. water was evaporated by heat), fire into wind (i.e. fire was blown away and extinguished by fierce wind), wind into the sky (i.e. the fiercest of storms were made impotent when they vanished into the dark recesses of the fathomless sky), and the sky into Ahankar (i.e. the sky element vanished in the body of Vishnu who represents the grosser form of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of the Supreme Being from which everything was born; here referring to the pride that Vishnu had that he can create the stupendously magnificent creation virtually from nothing, signifying that it was a 'mere hollow boast' symbolising the element of sky; refer 1/6 also in this context).

Next, this Ahankar merged with and collapsed into Mahat or Viraat (literally meaning great or vast or majestic or stupendous; the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm; the subtler form of Vishnu), Viraat into Abyakta (that which is un-manifest, un-describable and un-told; the macrocosmic subtle body), and finally this into Purush (the supreme transcendental Lord who is the supreme Spirit of creation; the macrocosmic causal body).

In this way, even the Viraat (the macrocosmic gross body of creation), the Hiranyagarbh (the macrocosmic subtle body), and Ishwar (the macrocosmic causal body of creation) collapse and merge with the Parmatma (the supreme Soul of creation).

In short, the circle goes one full round as it were! (6).

[Note—¹The five organs of actions are legs, hands, mouth, genitals and excretory.

²The five organs of perceptions are eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin.

³The five Prans are the vital winds—Pran or breath, Apaana, Udaana, Vyan and

⁴Anthakaran are four--Mana or mind, Buddhi or intelligence, Chitta or sub-conscious and its memory, and Ahankar or the notion of pride.]

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7.3 (b) The Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad:--

(Canto 3, paragraphs 7-16)

7. The disciple asked again—‘If it is true that the creation is impermanent and changes constantly, coming to an end at a certain given time, then what is the sequence in which this conclusion or end happens?’¹ (7).

[Note—¹The world or creation that would now be described represents the fourth Paad of Brahm. This Paad is called ‘Bhut’ as it is perishable and transient. These Bhuts are the basic constituents that make up this world and are the primary elements of creation in varying degrees of subtlety and grossness. The word ‘Bhut’ itself literally means one that is like a ‘ghost’—i.e. one that is imagined and is not the real thing! It is an apparition. Hence, the world representing the fourth Paad of Brahm, the Supreme Being, is due to the dominance of ignorance of the real truth and lack of truthful knowledge of the reality of Brahm which is actually represented by the other three Paads. This concept is made absolutely clear in Canto 4, especially its paragraph nos. 3-6.]

8. [In order to understand what is being described here in paragraph no. 8 and subsequent paragraph nos. 10-15, it will be fit to have a clear conception of the imagery that is employed for the narration.

The creation started from a point known as Brahm and then spread out in concentric circles just like ripples spreading out from a focal point on the surface of the water of a calm lake. The creation has been envisioned as a structure consisting of many concentric rings of increasing diameter and circumference. These circles or rings are drawn around a central hub or core which is the focal point of these rings.

Now, the first circle represents the domain of Brahma, the creator (paragraph no. 8); the second circle stands for Vishnu, the sustainer, also known as the Viraat Purush (paragraph nos. 10-11); the third circle for the Adi-Viraat, the parent of the Viraat Purush (paragraph no. 12); the fourth for Adi-Narayan (paragraph nos. 13-15); and the fifth circle represents Lord Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan to whom this Upanishad is dedicated. This Lord is the Supreme Being from whom the rest of the Gods have been born (paragraph no. 15).

The above narration of ever-increasing circles of greater diameters symbolises the expansion of creation. The circumference of any given circle would mark the end of a particular layer or strata or plane of existence. But as any bubble bursts when it has reached its outer limit, this creation also collapses—and this event is metaphorically depicted in paragraph nos. 9 and 16.]

The wise teacher was very pleased, and he respectfully explained—‘One day-time of Brahma (the creator) consists of one thousand cycles of creation and destruction, with each cycle consisting of the 4-Yug period¹ according to the Hindu tradition.

One night of Brahma has the same duration as his daytime.

Therefore, the complete ‘day’ of Brahma as we humans understand this term to mean (i.e. one full cycle of day-time + night-time) would be equal to the total time taken for one day-time and one night-time according to Brahma’s measurement of time at the cosmic level².

During this one day of Brahma, the world known as the Satya Loka (the truthful heaven where Brahma and the other senior Gods such as Vishnu live) is created and destroyed once. [That is, one cycle of creation and destruction of heaven would be equal to one thousand such cycles on earth where mortal creatures live.]

With this cosmic scale of measuring time, fifteen such days of Brahma would be his one ‘Paksha’ or fortnight.

Two such fortnights would be Brahma’s one month.

Two such months would be Brahma’s one season.

Three such seasons would be one solstice in the year of Brahma.

Two such solstices (i.e. the summer and the winter solstices) would make up one year of Brahma.

According to this celestial measurement of time, Brahma’s one life consists of one hundred such years.

This is said to be one life-span of Brahma the creator (8).

[Note—¹The four Yugs are the following four eras or phases of one cycle of creation and destruction—the first is the Sat-yug, the second is the Treta-yug, the third is the Dwapar-yug, and the fourth is the current Kali-yug.

The Satayug which was the great Vedic period of fire sacrifices, the Tretayug culminated with the incarnation of Lord Ram, the Dwaparyug ended with Lord Krishna’s incarnation, and the Kaliyug would end with the great deluge or Doomsday when the entire world would be drowned in water. The next Kalpa would come after that in a cyclic form. This happens because at the fag end of Kaliyug, sins and evils would have reached such a crescendo that the Supreme Being no longer is able to tolerate it though he is most tolerant, magnanimous and forgiving, and decides to finally wind up the whole thing by punishing the world by clean sweeping the slate. Only the righteous and auspicious few survive who would become the progenitors of the next cycle.

The Satayug is also called Kritiyug because elaborate fire sacrifices were done during this phase. It is equivalent to 4800 divine years of Gods, and 17,28,000 human years.

The Tretayug is equivalent to 3600 divine years of Gods, and 12,96,000 human years.

The Dwaparyug is equivalent to 2400 divine years of Gods, and 8,64,000 human years.

The Kaliyug is equivalent to 1200 divine years of Gods, and 4,32,000 human years.

²The days and nights of Brahma are much far extensive than what we understand them to be. The unit of time used to measure one day or life of Brahma is much like we use the term ‘light years’ when measuring distances of various stars and galaxies in the universe. They are so wide apart and distanced from earth and each other that to measure their distances in terms of earth units such as miles and kilometres would be nothing but madness. The same logic and

reason is used to set a separate scale for Brahma and other deities as narrated below.]

9. [The following paragraphs describe the cosmic process of regression or withdrawal or collapse or end of creation. Its creation and expansion has already been narrated in Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-12.]

At the end of his life the Viraat Purush¹ (i.e. the macrocosmic form of the creator known as Brahma) finds rest in, or withdraws himself into, his primary form known as the Hiranyagarbha. [This Hiranyagarbha is the subtle body of the Supreme Being, also called Brahm, from which the Viraat Purush had emerged earlier. Therefore, the Hiranyagarbha refers to the cosmic embryo that is nourished in the cosmic Anda, the cosmic egg, which was referred to in the last stanza of paragraph no. 9 of Canto 2. The egg laid by birds has a shell enclosing it, and similarly an embryo of humans too has an enclosing membrane to give it protection inside the womb of the mother. This outer shell or membrane symbolises the outer periphery of creation. Everything and all forms of life are within its walls. The womb of the mother where the embryo is lodged and where it develops would then be like Brahm that harbours this embryo in its cosmic womb. Meanwhile, the chick of the bird or the unborn infant of a man remains in complete darkness till the time it is inside the shell or the womb respectively. It is only when it comes out that it is able to see the light of day and become aware of the presence of the world of colourful charms. In other words, it is only when one breaks free from his old habits and chucks his old habitat that he can hope to find something new and exciting. As long as the chick or the infant remained cocooned in the shell or the mother's womb, it had its eyes closed, but as soon as they emerged outside they opened their eyes and observed the colourful and charming world of countless opportunities and forms. Thus, it is only when one employs one's mind and intellect to 'see around' that he is able to see beyond the darkness of ignorance and see the light of Truth.]

The Hiranyagarbha retires or finds rest by retracting or withdrawing itself further into its primary form which is the cosmic causal body where the cosmic Atma, the cosmic Consciousness, lives.

This state of restful existence and no activity of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic form of the supreme creator, when the former has withdrawn himself, when he has retracted all his tentacles and decided to take rest for some time by remaining comfortably ensconced in the shell of the causal body in his primary form as the cosmic Atma or Consciousness, is called the period of 'Pralaya' or the cosmic doomsday when everything ends, when everything is dissolved, when everything comes to a rest. During this time there is nothing but void and no activity of any kind. Everything comes to a naught then; it's a state of absolute neutrality and inertness² (9).

[Note—¹The terms *Viraat* and *Hiranyagarbha* must be clearly understood to avoid confusion because they are used for both Brahma as well as Vishnu. The term 'Viraat' means anything of colossal dimensions and nature, something that is vast and infinite. The Viraat Purush is the gross body of the Supreme Being known as Brahm from which the rest of creation emerged—refer Canto 2, paragraph 10-11. This Viraat has his roots in the cosmic egg in which the subtle body of Brahm took shape as the cosmic embryo, called the Hiranyagarbha—refer Canto 2, paragraph 12, stanza no. 1. The latter is so-

called because it was hidden in the cosmic womb ('Garbha'), and like the yellow-coloured yolk of the egg it was radiant and golden ('Hiranaya') in colour.

It was from this cosmic embryo called the Hiranyagarbha that the creation emerged, including the Viraat Purush, hence it is called 'Brahma the creator'. Refer Canto 2, paragraph 12, stanza 1.

The Viraat Purush is also the creator of this world as pointed out in Canto 2, paragraph 11, and the former is also entitled to be called Brahma the creator. It must be carefully noted that the difference lies in the level or plane of creation in which a particular entity is being considered for study.

Hiranyagarbha was the primordial cosmic fertilised egg, deriving its name from the fact that its yolk core was yellow and glowing with an incandescent light like the one radiating out from the splendorous Sun in the sky, called the Maartand.

There are different versions regarding this Hiranyagarbha. According to the concept of Vedanta, Brahm is the cosmic supreme and transcendental Consciousness residing in the macrocosmic causal body called the Ishwar. In this context, when Brahm decided to reveal or unfold this creation, first the causal body known as a Ishwar developed the macrocosmic subtle body called the Hiranyagarbha, and from this evolved the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm called the Viraat Purush. This is the picture at the macrocosmic level. All these three sublime bodies of Brahm at the cosmic level—viz. Ishwar, Hiranyagarbha and Viraat Purush—were invisible, subtle, unqualified, without any attributes, all-inclusive and all-pervading. It was the un-revealed form of Brahm. But that was just the beginning.

When this visible world was created, which had attributes and qualifications, the same macrocosmic units of Brahm metamorphosed themselves into their respective counterparts in the individual creature's body. Hence, Ishwar is represented by the Pragma or the individual's causal body, Hiranyagarbha is represented by the Taijas or the individual's subtle body, and the Viraat Purush is represented by the Vishwa or the individual's gross body.

These three bodies are the three states in which consciousness exists, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level. At the microcosmic level, the Pragma relates to the deep sleeper state of consciousness called the Sushupta state, the Taijas relates to the dreamer state of consciousness called Swapna state, and the Vishwa relates to the waking state of consciousness called Jagrat state. The three corresponding states at the macrocosmic level are the Ishwar which relates to the cosmic deep sleep state of Consciousness called cosmic Sushupta, the Hiranyagarbha which relates to the cosmic dreamer state of Consciousness called cosmic Swapna, and the Viraat Purush which relates to the cosmic waking state of Consciousness called cosmic Jagrat.

According to Purans, the Hiranyagarbha refers to the Brahma the creator, as well as to the Viraat Purush because Brahma was born atop a lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu who is no one else but the Viraat Purush. If the word 'Hiranyagarbha' is to indicate the cosmic egg, then it was from this egg, lodged in the womb-like navel of Vishnu, that Brahma emerged. Hence, the 'original creator' was not Brahma but the Viraat Purush as Vishnu, and therefore the latter is the Hiranyagarbha—the golden cosmic egg. So we conclude that Hiranyagarbha essentially refers to the cosmic egg from which the rest of the creation evolved. Since Brahma is said to be the great grandfather of this creation, he is aptly named Hiranyagarbha, i.e. the cosmic egg from which this visible and gross form of creation evolved.

This entire concept of Hiranyagarbha being produced from the body of the Supreme Being called Narayan or Ishwar have been elaborately dealt with in Maho-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 8 of the Sam Veda tradition.

The Hiranyagarbha is very subtle like the mind-intellect of the creature. The mind-intellect is also called the subtle body because it is through this mind-intellect that the Atma of the individual creature creates this world by using the mind's stupendous ability to imagine, envision and conceptualise things, and then using the intellect to justify it to be true, real and logical. But this instrument of the mind-intellect is invisible, is so subtle and hidden from view that its presence is only deduced by its astounding potentials which are manifested in the form of the gross body and its own stupendous capabilities. Whatever the mind wishes to do, it gets it done by the body.

This Hiranyagarbha is like the musk present in the body of the musk deer. The deer is not able to see the musk but is nevertheless maddened by its perfume, running mad in search of the source of the perfume not knowing that it is hidden well inside its own body. Similarly, the creature is unaware that the supreme Brahm is residing in his own bosom as the pure consciousness called the Atma while he spends his entire life searching for it everywhere in the outside world.

There is another connotation to this observation. Since the mind is the creator of the world by its power of imagination, and then sustaining or perpetuating its own creation by believing in the truthfulness and reality of the world, it is therefore the mind itself that can conclude this world. So, while it is like Brahma the creator, it is also like Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder. If the same mind can assume three roles, it is not incongruous to believe that the same Hiranyagarbha is Brahma and Vishnu simultaneously. Since Shiva is a synonym used for the supreme transcendental Brahm—because the word 'Shiva' stands for an entity that is truthful, beautiful, auspicious, divine and holy as affirmed by a number of Upanishads of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition that deal with the 'Shiva Tattwa', this Hiranyagarbha is also Shiva.

Hiranyagarbha is also called Maartanda, the Sun, because of its golden colour and brilliance like the golden yellow and brilliant disc of the sun in the sky. Like the light of the sun illuminates the world and brings everything in it to light or knowledge, the Hiranyagarbha too brings to the fore the intentions of Brahm by revealing this vast creation. The Hiranyagarbha had spread the sacred divinity, the stupendous glory, the dazzling radiance and the brilliant splendour through the length and breadth of the vast realm of the cosmos like the sun spreading its glory on the earth by way of its energy, light, heat and warmth.

The word 'Hiranyam' also refers to 'Amrit or elixir or nectar of eternity and bliss'; it also means 'green'. That is why greenery is associated with fertility, vibrancy, life and abundance of food and plentiful vegetation. The trees are green, and their precursor, the algae and moss, were also green. Indeed the food is the elixir of life in the world—nothing can ever survive without food and water. So, 'Hiranyagarbha' first created these to initiate the process of creation, and then sustained them once the process got under way. The 'Viraat Purush' as well as the 'Hiranyagarbha' are both used often synonymously to indicate the macrocosmic forms of the Male aspect of creation whose female counterpart is called 'Nature' or Shakti. The Shakti is the dynamic aspect of Brahm's creative powers and an effective method of displaying the Lord's cosmic authority.

The *Viraat Purush*, according to metaphysics, is the gross body of the creation and it is this body which is the source from which the rest of the cosmos was moulded or created or manifested. That is, the entire creation, both visible and invisible, is a manifested or revealed form of this Viraat Purush.

Purush has been defined in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 explicitly as the cosmic all-pervading macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being, called the Viraat Purush, who had entered each and every body of all the creatures and had taken up his residence there. According to the Aiteriyo Upanishad of Rig Veda,

Canto 1, verse nos. 3, the supreme Brahm created the vast universe and his image in the form of the Viraat Purush, and the Gods were created from this Viraat—Canto 1, verse no. 4. When the mortal world consisting of the visible world was created, the human body was considered as the best image of the Viraat Purush, and thus all these Gods took up their residence in it—Canto 2, verse nos. 3-5. According to the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18, it was this Viraat Purush himself that entered the body of all the creatures created.

The Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 9-10 clearly affirm that it is the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm, that resides in the body of all living beings as their Atma.

In fact, the entire Mundak (Canto) 2, section 1 of the Mundak Upanishad is devoted to the theme of Viraat Purush, and it says that the entire creation has been created as a manifestation of the Viraat Purush.

According to reverend Sankracharya's commentary on Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 3, verse no. 11 and Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 12, the word Purush refers to that supreme entity which uniformly pervades in and completely fills everything that exists. It also refers to one who resides inside any place and completely owns that place. Therefore, this word Purush refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm who has taken up residence in the gross body of the creature at the micro level and in the Viraat Purush at the macro level. This Brahm pervades throughout them in a uniform way even as the sky and the wind element occupy all available space in the creation. That is also why sky is considered as a nearest analogy of Brahm because even the other all-pervading element, the wind/air, is present in it and not outside of it.

According to Vedanta therefore, the word Purush refers to the primary and supreme creator of creation known as the Viraat Purush who represents the macrocosmic gross Male body or aspect of the cosmos and is the first macrocosmic gross revelation of Brahm. Ultimately, this Brahm is the Supreme Being who has revealed himself as the Viraat Purush. The creation unfolded from this Purush when he metamorphosed as the gross body of the entire creation, visible and invisible. Therefore, he is the sum-total of all the gross bodies of all the creatures taken together in this creation at the macrocosmic level, and it is from his macrocosmic body that the entire creation was moulded. In other words, the Viraat Purush represents the entire spread of the cosmos. At the micro level of the world, the individual creature is the counter part of Viraat Purush. In other words, the individual gross body of the creature is the microcosmic form of that Viraat, because the entire creation is a manifestation of the same Viraat; it is an image of Viraat.

Literally, the word 'Purush' means someone who resides in a body. Here the body is the gross forms of the various entities of creation in which the Viraat Purush, as the cosmic manifestation of the supreme Brahm took up residence at the time of creation and does so since that time. When the creation would finally wind up, this Viraat would revert back to his original form as the invisible Brahm. An entire Sukta in the Rig Veda, 10/19 is dedicated to this Viraat Purush

In the Purans, he is also known by other names, such as Vishnu, the sustainer. Since the Viraat is the male aspect of creation and the primary source of life, Vishnu is also regarded as the creator as well as the sustainer of the creation. But since Vishnu, as Viraat Purush, is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, he is also regarded as being synonymous with Brahm. The entire universe has been created by Vishnu's passive powers using Shakti as its active power and partner.

The word 'Viraat' refers to something that is vast, colossus, immeasurable, fathomless, and infinite and beyond all terrestrial yardsticks. The supreme Lord encloses the entire creation from all sides like an envelop, and at the same time he remains

uniformly and inseparably present throughout it like salt which has been dissolved in water. At the time of creation, the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Shiva the concluder, and Vishnu the sustainer, had all emerged from the Viraat Purush. According to Purans, this Viraat and Lord Vishnu are the same divine factors of creation. The subtler form is known as Viraat, while its grosser form is Vishnu—though the terms ‘subtle and gross’ are only relative and for the purpose of understanding, because both are the same indivisible Brahm who is non-dual and immutable.

²This *Pralaya* or dooms-day of Brahm is separate from the dooms-day of this mortal world on earth which is only one day of Brahma. It should be remembered that the entire creation is depicted as being in layers or in concentric circles with increasing distance from the center. Refer Canto 6, paragraph nos. 2-9 in this context.]

10. One day-time and one night-time of Lord Vishnu, who is the protector, nourisher and sustainer of the cosmic egg or the ‘Anda’ (i.e. the entire Universe) created out of a fraction (‘genes’ or ‘sperm’) of the Supreme Being known as Adi-Narayan (or the supreme Brahm), is equivalent to one life-time (or life-span) and one sleeping time (or the ‘Pralaya’ time) of Brahma the creator respectively. That is, one full ‘day’ in the life of Vishnu is equivalent in length and duration to one cosmic cycle of birth and dissolution of Brahma the creator of this physical world. [One full ‘day’ of Vishnu implies both the waking phase and the sleeping phase of Vishnu just like our human days are measured which includes the day time when there is sunlight and the ordinary man is usually awake, and the night time when there is darkness in the absence of sunlight. The ‘life-span of Brahma’ and the ‘duration of Pralaya’ have been narrated in paragraph no. 9 above. This means that one hundred years in the life of Brahma is equal to one day-time of Lord Vishnu when he is awake, and one hundred such long years of Pralaya when Brahma, in his subtle form as the Hiranyagarbha, rests in the causal body of Brahm, is equal to one night-time of Vishnu when he retires. Therefore, one full ‘day’ of Lord Vishnu = one full cycle of creation done by Brahma, starting from his current birth, ending in his dissolution, and extending to the point of time just prior to his re-birth in the next phase of creation.]

With this scale of measurement, Lord Vishnu’s fortnights, months, seasons, solstices and years are measured.

Hence, one full life-span Vishnu consists of one hundred crore years measured according to this cosmic scale of time that relates to Vishnu as narrated above. [1 Crore = 10 million units. In other words, one life-span of Vishnu = 100 x 10 million years according to the measurement of time on Vishnu’s scale.] (10).

11. At the end of his life-span, Vishnu reverts back into his primary form as the Viraat Purush. This marks the ‘end’ or the dissolution of Vishnu.

When this comes to happen, the universe ends along with all its different formations and layers. This eventuality when the universe dissolves into nothing is the primary form of Vishnu as the Viraat Purush. It marks the beginning of the great Pralaya or dooms-day of the universe, or the resting phase or the sleeping phase of Vishnu¹.

The resting or sleeping period of Vishnu is of the same duration as his life-span. This is the great ‘Pralaya of Vishnu’ when everything comes to a naught, when there is complete stillness and inactivity, when nothing exists and moves, when nothing shows signs of life and activity. [The ‘resting or sleeping time of Vishnu’ is when the Lord rests

or sleeps peacefully, and depicted in the Purans as the Viraat Purush reclining on the bedstead made of the coiled body of the celestial serpent known as Seshnath who floats on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk known as the Kshir-sagar, and which corresponds to the dissolution of creation at the cosmic level or the circle or plane in which Vishnu resides in the broader perspective of the entire creation. This period is equivalent to one crore years also. This concept of measurement is explained in paragraph 10.] (11).

[Note—¹The ordinary waking phase of Vishnu represents the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness. It is during this phase that a creature (a living being) gets actively aware and involved in the gross external world.

On the other hand, the ordinary sleeping phase of Vishnu marks the Swapna or the dreaming state as well as the Sushupta or the deep-sleep state of consciousness when the sleeping creature is neither aware of the outside world nor does he get involved in this external world for the simple reason that his gross body and its sense organs are totally inactive during this state.

This phase leads to the next higher state known as the Turiya state, or the transcendental state of consciousness. This is of a much longer duration than the Sushupta state, and is a perpetual state of bliss when nothing matters. It is during this state that self-realised ascetics find Samadhi, which is a state of trance. While the Sushupta is only momentary and transient because sooner than later the consciousness reverts back to the dreaming and the waking states, the Turiya state is more steady and long-lasting. Once this state is reached, there is no reversal. This is equivalent to the 'Pralaya of Vishnu' which means that the existence of the gross aspect of creation has been completely done away with.

It must be kept in mind that Vishnu represents that aspect of creation that has already taken birth or already has come into being after it was created by Brahma, the creator, and till the time it is concluded by Shiva or Rudra as its concluder. The entire living world passes through these phases—it sleeps for a certain time and keeps awake for certain duration of time. This rhythm of ordinary humdrum life is represented by Vishnu. An ordinary creature remains involved neck-deep in the affairs of the world around him. He takes care of his possessions and his subjects, desires to possess more and still more, and devise better ways to improve his own living as well as those dependent upon him. He protects his own assets and his body to the best of his abilities. All efforts of his are directed towards attaining happiness, deriving joy and pleasures from his surroundings, and generally taking care of his all-round well-being. This is obviously the role of Vishnu as the caretaker, the sustainer and the protector of creation.

However, there are some rare people who realise the futility of this wild-goose chase, and having had the opportunity to study the Upanishads and other scriptures they realise that true happiness and bliss lies somewhere else, that this world is perishable and therefore the joys and happiness that it provides are also transient. So they decide for themselves to pursue the source of eternal and truthful happiness and joy, which they find in realisation of the truth about themselves, and about the 'pure consciousness' that forms their true 'self'. With this realisation they taste the eternal source of Amrit or nectar that they prefer to remain submerged in its ecstasy and keep suckling it. Then they would have nothing to do with this gross external world.

Therefore, for all practical purposes this world has come to a naught for them, it has ceased to exist, it has dissolved. This is equivalent to the 'Pralaya' or the end of the world for them. Since the living being is an image of Vishnu in his form as the Viraat Purush, it follows that this is also equivalent to the 'Pralaya of Vishnu' when the world dissolves

around him. A lot of imagery and metaphors are used to explain these grand philosophies of the Upanishads.]

12. The one life time and one Pralaya time of Vishnu (i.e. one full life cycle of Vishnu) is equivalent to one day-time and one night-time of the 'Adi-Viraat Purush'. [The word 'Adi' means one that was present at the beginning; the primary and the original entity from which the present has come into being. Hence, the term 'Adi-Viraat' would refer to the higher and subtler form of the Viraat Purush from whom Vishnu has been born or created during the very primary stages of evolution of creation. Vishnu is the grosser aspect or the revealed form of the Viraat Purush. Vishnu represents that aspect or quality or dynamism or power of the Supreme Being which helps to sustain, nourish and protect the creation, including the creator Brahma himself. Applying the logic used for Brahma the creator while describing the process of creation and dissolution, it follows that Lord Vishnu, who is more often than not treated as being synonymous with the Viraat Purush, is like Brahma the creator in the higher echelons of creation. Vishnu is the Brahma of the third layer of the cosmic matrix, the third circle of creation called the Vishnu Loka. The first circle is the mortal world where ordinary creatures live—it is called the Bhu Loka. The second circle is the world where Brahma lives—called the 'Brahma Loka'.

The 'Adi-Viraat' is the subtler and more sublime form of the Viraat Purush from whom this universe in which we live is created. The 'Adi-Viraat' is the form of the Supreme Being that is referred to in Canto 2, paragraph 11 which says that millions of universes are born from each pore of the body of the Viraat. This creation has been visualised as being in different layers like many concentric circles, one higher than its previous one. This concept will be further discussed in Canto 6.]

Hence, one 'full day' in the entire life-span of the Adi-Viraat Purush would obviously consist of one life cycle of Vishnu as stated above. [One 'full day' implies a complete circle of one sunlight time and one night time according to our earth terminology. In cosmic terms it implies one full life-span of Vishnu and one full Pralaya of Vishnu as narrated in previous paragraph nos. 10-11.]

With this cosmic scale of measurement of time, the fortnights, months, seasons, solstices and years of the 'Adi-Viraat' are measured.

Therefore, one life-span of the Adi-Viraat Purush is equivalent to one hundred crore years measured according to this cosmic scale of time that relates to the Adi-Viraat as narrated above. [1 Crore = 10 million units. In other words, one life-span of the Adi-Viraat = 100 x 10 million years according to the measurement of time on Adi-Viraat's scale.] (12).

13. At the end of his life-span, the Adi-Viraat Purush withdraws himself into his primary form known as the 'Adi-Narayan', who is adorned by the Maha Maya and is the primary cause of the Adi-Viraat's existence.

That is, at the end of his life-span, the Adi-Viraat dissolves into the Adi-Narayan, the supreme Brahm, from whom the former had been born, or who was the primary cause of the former's coming into being.

[The Adi-Narayan would be the fourth concentric circle, the higher echelon of creation. He is the more subtle form of the Supreme Being that transcends the Adi-Viraat form. It would be noted that the differences between all these cosmic entities is very fine and subtle. It can be illustrated with an ordinary example. The air element is the same

within the earth's atmosphere, but the density of air near the earth's surface is obviously more than the highest point of the atmosphere. Even the percentage or density of the various gases and other ingredients of air vary at different levels. Hence, as we move up and away from the surface of the earth, the ingredients of the air and the characteristics of the space around the earth change, but primarily they will always remain the air and the sky elements, retaining their intrinsic qualities and virtues. Likewise, the same Supreme Being known as Brahm exists throughout this creation in all its different levels, and this Brahm exhibits different sets of characteristics at each level. It is only the degree of grossness and subtlety that changes, and not the primary nature of Brahm. The fact that Brahm appears to change miraculously and exhibit different characteristics at different points of time and dimensions of creation which are much divergent and not related to the original characters of Brahm as outlined in this Upanishad is an evident form of the stupendous ability of the Supreme Being to create delusions. And this is called 'Maha Maya'—or, the Great Delusion.]

The time during which the Adi-Viraat remains at rest or dissolved is called the period of Pralaya of Adi-Viraat and the dissolution of the level of creation which is associated with him. This period is equivalent to the one life-span of the Adi-Viraat (as outlined in paragraph no. 12 above). [That is, the duration of the period of Pralaya of the Adi-Viraat, or the time when he sleeps or lies in rest, which is equal to the period of his one life-span, would be another one hundred crore years or a 100 million years.]

During this phase of Pralaya of the Adi-Viraat, everything comes to a naught; there is absolute stillness and no activity whatsoever.

[Therefore, one full cycle of existence and dissolution of the cosmos at the level of the Adi-Viraat Purush, which is higher than that related to Vishnu, would consist of one full life-span and one full length of Pralaya or resting phase of the Adi-Viraat.] (13).

14. The one day-time of the parent Adi-Narayan, the Primal Purush, is equivalent to one full life-span of the off spring known as the Adi-Viraat. Similarly, one night-time of Adi-Narayan is equivalent to one period of Pralaya of Adi-Viraat. [The 'Adi-Narayan' is the fifth level of creation in the order of increasing subtlety and sublimity.]

Hence, one 'full day' in the life of the Adi-Narayan consists of one such day-time and one such night-time as measured according to the cosmic scale of Adi-Narayan.

Extended further, his fortnight, month, season, solstice and one year is also measured with this cosmic time scale.

Thus, one full life-span of the Adi-Narayan is equivalent to one hundred crore such years as measured according to the scale of cosmic time that is applicable to the Adi-Narayan (14).

15. At the end of this tenure, the Adi-Narayan goes to sleep or takes rest by closing his eyes as per the wishes of the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan¹. This is called the 'Nimesh' of the Adi-Narayan, or the time during which the Lord's eyes are closed. [The subtle world of Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan is the 6th level of creation of the cosmic matrix. The sequence is as follows—1st level is the world mortal creature, called 'Bhu Loka', the 2nd level is of Brahma, the creator, called the 'Brahma Loka', the 3rd level is that of Vishnu, the sustainer and caretaker, and his world known as the 'Vishnu Loka', the 4th level is of the Adi-Viraat, the parent of the Viraat Purush who is also known as Vishnu,

the 5th level is Adi-Narayan, and finally the 6th level or circle of creation is represented by the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan. In other words, this creation is visualised as consisting of concentric rings, with the 'Bhu Loka' being the inner-most ring, and the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan as the outer-most ring.]

When this happens, the Mool Avidya and the accompanying Anda with all its various layers dissolve into nothing; their existence comes to an end. This is called the Pralaya of creation at the level of Adi-Narayan. [The universe is visualised as an egg that harbours creation at varying levels of subtlety and development. In order to understand the process of dissolution or regression or withdrawal one must know the process of progression or growth and expansion of the entity that regresses or withdraws into itself. The process of forward motion or evolution of creation has already been described in Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-12 of this present Upanishad.] (15).

[Note—¹The meaning as to who is the great and the senior God known as Maha Narayan would now become clear. All the divine entities mentioned till now—viz. the mortal world of living beings, Brahma, Vishnu, Adi-Viraat and Adi-Narayan are only one Paad or aspect of the Supreme Being known as 'Maha Narayan'—the Great Narayan or the Great Lord God. This Maha Narayan is the outer boundary of creation of which we are aware, enclosing everything from the outside. These five worlds represent only 'one' aspect or Paad or foot of the Great Lord known as the supreme transcendental 'Brahm', the Supreme Being.

This Brahm is known to have 'four' Paads, hence the rest of the existence that has an extremely subtle and sublime form would logically represent the rest of the combined 'three' Paads of Brahm. These are represented by the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan—literally meaning the Great Narayan with the divine glories that are representative of his three aspects ('Tri Paad') other than the ones already described in this Canto till now. The Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan is just like the moat that surrounds a grand huge fort. A better imagery would be to visualise this known creation with its limited span as a huge continent, and the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan as the vast and fathomless ocean surrounding this continent. The fact of the matter is that even in actual practice, the land mass of earth is approximately only one-fourth of the total area of the earth, with the rest three-fourths covered with water, be it in the form of an ocean, a sea or a river. This picture would help to explain the further sub-divisions of the subtler aspect of creation as narrated in the forthcoming paragraph no. 16.

Who essentially is this 'Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan' has been beautifully explained in Canto 4, paragraph nos. 2-6 of this Upanishad.

One can well imagine the stupendity of Brahm if only of its feet is so grand that it covers the entire gamut of creation as we know and even can imagine about.]

The 4 'Paads', or limbs, legs, aspects, facets or pedestals of Brahm—The four 'Paads' of Brahm are the four legs upon which Brahm stands. These four Paads symbolically establish the greatness and supremacy of Brahm as the all-powerful and all-controlling Authority in this creation. Since Brahm is the supreme Divinity that has revealed itself in the from of this creation, since each and every unit of creation is a manifestation of Brahm and without Brahm nothing exists, nothing has any relevance and truth (refer *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 1), it follows that the entire creation represents Brahm's four cosmic forms or aspects or facets—which are called the four legs or Paads of Brahm. This is a metaphoric way of saying that the supreme Brahm has manifested himself and is made known to this world by the means of these four mediums.

The four Paads of Brahm stand for the four states of existence of consciousness—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming state, the Sushupta or deep sleep state, and the Turiya or transcendental state. This fact is affirmed in the Atharva Veda's *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 5; Canto 4, paragraphs 1-3.

These four Paads of Brahm have been explained in (i) Sam Veda's *Chandogya Upanishad*, Canto 3, section 18, verse nos. 2-6, Canto 4, Section 5, verse no. 2, Canto 4, Section 6, verse no. 3, Canto 4, Section 7, verse no. 3, and Canto 4, Section 8, verse no. 3. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's *Brahm Upanishad*, verse no. 1. (iii) Atharva Veda's *Mandukya Upanishad*, verse nos. 3-7; *Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse nos. 4-7; *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 5; Canto 4, paragraph nos. 2-3, 6; Canto 8, paragraph no. 4; *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 5-8; *Par Brahm Upanishad*, verse no. 5; *Narad Parivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 8, verse nos. 9-19.]

16. The above narration of dissolution or regression of creation, extending from paragraph nos. 7 to 15, pertains to the grosser aspect of creation. The present paragraph no. 16 will describe this process when it becomes finer and more subtle.]

At the time of final dissolution, the Mool Avidya (i.e. the primary and principal form of Avidya)—which possesses such unique and mysterious qualities as being distinct from both truth and falsehood, as being indescribable and indefinable, as being without any specific attributes and characteristic features, as being the cause of the creation, its expansion and dissolution, as being the most ancient and the primary element since the beginning of everything, as being the primary cause of all the other causes, and as being endowed with the greatest of mystical and magical powers known as 'Maha Maya' that ever existed in this creation—withdraws its self, along with all its grand qualities and vivid forms that have expanded in all the directions of creation, into its primary and most subtle form which is at the root of its coming into being in the first place. When this happens, all the above qualities of the Mool Avidya, which make it so unique, enigmatic and mystical, are abandoned, and it reverts back to its unqualified and neutral source, known as 'Avyakta', from which it had sprung at the time of expansion of creation.

The root cause of the origin of the Avidya is known as 'Avyakta'—i.e. one that is not manifest, one that is not expressed, one which cannot be described and known because it is very subtle, minute and atomic in nature. This Avyakta is the secret that is not known. So, the Avidya dissolves into the Avyakta¹.

Finally, at the last stage of dissolution, the Avyakta collapses and dissolves in the Brahm. This situation is akin to the state of existence of the 'fire element' after the fuel is exhausted. [The Fire is an eternal element, and when the fuel is exhausted it just retracts its self into its primary form as the 'Avyakta' Fire. That is, the visible form of the 'fire' becomes invisible and un-manifest, but it has not died in the real sense as it is an omnipresent and eternal entity. When the conditions are conducive and favourable, the 'fire' would jump back to life and become evident; it would be re-kindled.]

In the context of Adi-Narayan, the Supreme Being from whom this creation springs forth, it implies that when the Maha Maya (the great delusions that surround the primary nature and form of the Supreme Being) is removed or discarded by the Lord, he reverts to his principal divine form that is feature-less and indescribable. It was the Maya (delusions, or ignorance of the truth) that had led to the creation of a web of imaginary features around the basically feature-less Consciousness called Brahm. Primary Avidya

(primary ignorance of the truth) and Maya (delusions that accompany Avidya) had given shape and form to an entity that has no forms and shapes. Hence, when Avidya and Maya are removed, this principal entity (Adi-Narayan) becomes free from their influence and becomes one without any attributes and qualifications. The latter form is the principal form of Adi-Narayan, the Avyakta (the subtle and the un-manifest).

In fact, all the creatures (i.e. all forms of life in this creation) acquire or assume their original nature and form (as the blissful 'self', the immaculate 'consciousness') when the Adi-Narayan sleeps².

Even as the colourless crystal appears to be tinged red when it is associated (extremely close; touching) a red-coloured flower of China Rose (*clom eviseora*), and regains its original pristine colourless form when the flower is removed (or the crystal itself is removed), the pristine and immaculate prime nature of Brahm appears to be similarly tainted and influenced when there are Maya and Avidya near this Divinity. When this happens, Brahm appears to exhibit various attributes and qualifications; it appears as having a dual form or existence, and exhibits other such delusory features that are natural effects of Maya and Avidya.

When all such attributes and qualifications that are assigned to Brahm and used to describe the latter are eliminated, what remains is the pristine pure primary form of Brahm that has no attributes, qualities or characteristics; this Brahm has no forms and shapes, no qualifications whatsoever.' (16).

[Note—¹The cause of this entire creation coming into being is that Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, decided to 'create' it. It is an 'imagination' of Brahm; it was his 'wish' personified. Once the imaginative mind of Brahm created this creation, it began to believe it to be true; the mind become conditioned into believing that something which has no pith and substance, something that is entirely imaginary was actually true and real. This is because this world was Brahm's own creation, and anyone who creates something is highly attached to it at the emotional level.

This had two effects—(i) since Brahm is super Consciousness empowered with stupendous and astounding mystical powers and abilities, the 'imaginary' world created was made 'real'; and (ii) Brahm was so charmed by his own creation that for once he forgot that it is imaginary. As a result, Brahm got sucked in a vortex of delusions which were his own creation.

So, the genesis of this creation and its myriad delusions lie in fundamental 'Avidya' or basic lack of awareness of the reality that had engulfed Brahm at the very first stage of creation. Brahm had forgotten the truth that what unfolded before his eyes was nothing but 'imaginary', that the colourful canvas of the creation was his own 'wishful thinking' taking a shape, and it was no less than the colour of the sky as seen during sunset or the simmering water as seen in the desert mirage.

Thus, Brahm transformed or metamorphosed into Brhama the creator. This is why the two words—'Brahm' and 'Brahma'—have very close resemblance. Once sucked into the vortex and overcome with both Maya and Avidya, Brahm plunged head-on into the Prapanch of this creation—he became Vishnu to take care of his off spring in the form of this creation.

But when wisdom dawned on Brahm, he decided to get out of it and renounce it. So he became Shiva, the patron God of ascetics and hermits. And finally, fed up with the constant disturbance caused by the steady pricking of the world created by him, and to regain his eternal peaceful and tranquil state to which Brahm was accustomed, he decided to wind up the game—thereby assuming the form of Rudra.

So we see that when the basic or fundamental cause of delusion—i.e. the ‘Mool Avidya’—is removed, what remains is the undefined divine entity known as ‘Avyakta’. That is, Brahm was ‘Avyakta’ or unmanifest and unknown till the time Avidya or ignorance overtook him, because once this happened Brahm assumed the role of Brahma to create, Vishnu to sustain what he created, and then Shiva or Rudra to conclude it. These are the ‘Vyakta’ or manifested form of Brahm. Besides this, the known world is said to be an image of Brahm, and since this creation is visible and manifest for all, it represents the ‘Vyakta’ form of Brahm.

Therefore, what was fundamentally ‘Avyakta’ (unmanifest, mysterious and unknown) became Vyakta (manifest, evident and known). This is why the cosmic Consciousness is known as ‘Avyakta’ while its manifested form as Brahma, Vishnu etc. as well as the world are known as ‘Vyakta’.

²This concept must be clearly understood. The individual living being is an image of the Supreme Being known by various names such as Narayan, Viraat Purush or Brahm. When he is awake and active in this world he surrounds himself with so many emotions and feelings. He speaks, tastes, smells, sees, hears, feels, goes here and there, accepts and gives, excretes, and enjoys the pleasures and comforts of the sense objects of the world. Not only this, he hankers for them, yearns for them, fights and commits the greatest of sins for them, and spends his entire life-time pursuing them relentlessly. That is not the end—for at the time of death he regrets that he has to leave behind this ever-so changing world and desires to take birth again to re-live in it and wallow in it once again. This is akin to him being surrounded by Avidya and Maya—because inspite of being aware that this world is artificial, perishable, ever-changing, transient and most deceitful, a world that is a hot-bed of miseries and pains, of turmoil and turbulence, but definitely not a provider of eternal bliss and peace, he stills yearns for it and treats it as the true and the real thing. This situation is like the Adi-Narayan being surrounded by Avidya and Maya.

Now, when the same living being sleeps, he is totally oblivious of the surrounding world and its charms. In this state of existence he lives as the ‘consciousness’ that moves (pulsates, vibrates, radiates) inside his gross body.

In the higher echelons of sleep however, his sub-conscious mind also goes into hibernation, and he stops even to be disturbed by any kind of dream. This is the state of complete bliss. It is the true nature of the creature’s ‘self’ which is the pure ‘consciousness’ referred above. Since this ‘consciousness’ is at the core of his existence, it is called his ‘soul’ or Atma. In the context of the Adi-Narayan, when the Lord sleeps as narrated in this Canto, he is deemed to have discarded all the surrounding Avidya and Maya, and rest in his blissful ‘self’, the primary cosmic Consciousness that is the only Truth in creation, the Truth that is also known as ‘Brahm’.

It must be noted here that all forms of life in creation are images of the same Supreme Being known as Adi-Narayan or Brahm. When the cosmic Consciousness assumes a body, however subtle it might be, it is called Narayan. When it dispenses with this body, it exists in its primary form as the ‘Consciousness’, and then it is known as Brahm. Any kind of body which has no consciousness pulsating inside it would be dead, lifeless and inert. So, ‘Brahm’ is the consciousness or the soul or the Atma of Narayan. Hence, Brahm is the ‘Adi-Narayan’ because it is the primordial and the primary (‘Adi’) dynamic force of creation known as the cosmic ‘consciousness’ that keeps Narayan and all his manifestations alive.]

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APPENDIX

Some of the other references with respect to the Revelation of Creation are the following:--

(a) *Vishnu Puran* describes the process of ‘Genesis of Creation’ in its Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 33-51; Chapter 3, Cantos 1-3; and the ‘Conclusion of Creation’ or its retrogression, involving the various stages leading to the ‘dooms-day’, in its Chapter 6, Cantos 3-4.

Vishnu Puran describes the ‘Creation of the Vedas’ in Chapter 3, Cantos 4-6

(b) The Narayan Shukta of the Shukla Yajur Veda also describes the genesis of creation in its verse no. 1.

(c) The Atharva Veda’s *Tripura Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 3 says that the creation came into being as a result of a union between Shiva and Shakti. To quote—
“The entire creation, including the various Lokas (worlds), the Vedas, the Shastras (ancient scriptures), the Purans (mythological histories), the Dharma Shastras (codes of conduct; jurisprudence), the Chikitsa Shastra (the science of herbal medicine) and Jyotish (astrology), has come into being as a union of Shiva and Shakti (Brahm and his dynamic powers of creation). [3].”

(d) The ‘Creation of the Viraat Purush’: This has been described in the following Upanishads which have been included in this book:

(i) Aiteriya Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 3-4; Canto 2, verse nos. 3-5. = Page: 15.

(ii) Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18. =Page: 149.

(e) The ‘Creation of the 16 Kalaas (facets)’ of a man’s personality: This has been described in the following Upanishad which has been included in this book:

Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 6, verse no. 4 = Page: 379.

(f) The ‘Creation of the couple’ (a male and a female): This has been described in the following Upanishads which have been included in this book:

(i) Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4 = Page: 379.

(ii) Brihad Aranyka Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 4, verse no. 3 = Page: 149.

(g) The ‘Creation of the five Koshas (cells; subtle aspects of the body of the creature):

This has been described in the following Upanishad which has been included in this book: Paingal Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 4. =Page: 74.

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About the Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His English Books published separately by a reputed publisher of India, the details of whom can be had by contacting the author on his email given below, include: (i) The series on '108 Upanishads' in five volumes having eighteen parts, (ii) Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in two parts, (iii) 'Devi Puran Ramayan', (iv) Valmiki's 'Adbhut Ramayan', and (v) 'Biography of Lord Ram' based on Tulsidas' books.

Genre of Writing: Spiritualism, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Religious, Devotional and Theological.

The author's Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

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“Anthology of Sacred Hymns, Stotras & Mantras of Lord Ram”; (15) “Vairagya Shatkam” of king-sage Bhartrihari; (16) An Anthology of the Sanyas Upanishads-Parts 1 and 2; (17) “Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan” or the “Aadi Ramayan” based on Tulsidas’ Ram Charit Manas; (18) The Legendary Glory of Hanuman; (19) “Narad Bhakti Sutra”—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord; (20) “Shandilya Bhakti Sutra”—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord according to the illustrious sage Shandilya; (21) “Bhakti Sutra Mala”—A Garland of Spiritual Wisdom in the form of an Anthology of Aphorisms pertaining to Bhakti or devotion, love and affection for Lord God; (22) Glory of Lord Ram’s Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns; (23) Saints and Non-Saints: Their Distinguishing Characters and Qualities; (24) A True Guru (Qualities, Importance and Need of a True Teacher, Preceptor, Guide and Advisor); (25) “Sundar Kand” of Ram Charit Manas; (26) The Story of Ravana and the Epic War of Lanka—Told in Slow Motion (based on, and will have the full relevant Text of, Ram Charit Manas, Adhyatma Ramayan, Anand Ramayan, Geetawali Ramayan, and Kavitawali Ramayan).

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(C) A full-blown English rendering of Tulsidas’ epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’ is under preparation. It will be a unique Book and an elaborate one, as it would run into many thousands of pages that would endeavour to explain each single verse of Ram Charit Manas in detail from different perspectives, with the aid of explanatory notes and references.

Contact details of Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia—

Postal address:-36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg, P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—224123, Distt. Ayodhya (Faizabad), U.P. India.

Phone:—(India) +919451290400; +919935613060.

Email of Author: (1) ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com

(2) ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com

Facebook ID: www.facebook.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia8

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/AjaiKumarChhawchharia

Goodreads:

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/991710.Ajai_Kumar_Chhawchharia